

PUCK AND PUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 8, 1921.

Price 7 Cents

A NEW-YORK WORKING BOY; OR, A FIGHT FOR A FORTUNE.

AND OTHER STORIES

BY DONALD MONTGOMERY

HEIMER
&
URUS.

MANHEIMER AND COHEN



Alice struggled and screamed. Dan flew in pursuit, and struck the man with all his force on the arm. At the same instant the woman in the hack leaped out and laid hold of Alice, too. "Take her in!" hissed the man.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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A New York Working Boy OR, A FIGHT FOR A FORTUNE

By HOWARD AUSTIN

CHAPTER I.—The Plot Against Alice Gates.

Ding, dong! Ding, dong! Ding, dong! The big bell of the woodenware factory was ringing. It was on a blustering March morning, some years ago. Sleepy men, tired-looking women, boys and girls were hurrying down West Fourth street, in the City of New York, all anxious to get through the big gate before it closed. Those who did not succeed had, by order of Paddleford & Runk, the proprietors, to wait outside the office door half an hour. They were then admitted in solemn procession, and each docked a quarter of a day's pay.

Now, for a New York working boy, whose salary amounts to the princely sum of three dollars a week, the loss of a quarter of a day is no joke. This is the reason why we behold young Dan Denning racing down the street like mad. Slambang! went the big gate right in his very teeth. Dan was only seventeen, and had a widowed mother and a sick sister depending upon him for support. When he saw the big gate go banging shut he was so angry that he could almost cry. There was nothing for it but to go to the office. When Dan got to the office steps—they were around the corner on Eleventh avenue—he found that he was the only victim that morning. The office windows were wide open, but the door, of course, was shut. Inside he could see Jim Johnson, the colored office boy, raising a terrible dust with his broom. Dan leaned over the railing and looked in at the window.

"Hey, Jim! Jim!"

"Hello!"

"Looker here, Jim!"

"Wha's de matter?"

"Jim, I'm too late for the gate. Is any one round?"

"No—only Joe Runk. He's gone upstairs."

"Do a feller a good turn, Jim, and pull me up through the window before any one else comes. It'll save me being docked, and some day I'll do as much for you."

"Golly, Dan, it's as much as mah head's wuth if Joe Runk should ketch me!"

"But he won't catch you if ye're quick. Hurry up! I hear somebody coming down the street!"

Now, there are none so thoroughly good-natured as the good-natured colored folks. Jim Johnson dropped his broom, thrust his stout arms out the window, caught hold of Dan, and pulled him in.

"Scoot down cellar an' go up de back stairs," he said. "You'll meet Joe Runk if you don't, fer

suhah. By golly! Too late! Dere he comes now!"

A quick footstep was heard outside the door which led into the factory. Poor Dan felt a cold shiver running down his back. He made a bolt for the window. Too late, sure enough. There was a man coming up the steps.

"Into de closet—into de closet!" whispered Jim. "He won't stay but a minute and den I'll let you out."

Quick as lightning the good-natured boy opened the closet door, thrust Dan in, and, seizing his broom, began sweeping furiously, filling the whole office with a cloud of dust. Such was the state of affairs when the door opened and in came Joe Runk, the dudish son of the junior partner. Now, Joe Runk was a shrewd, unscrupulous, dissipated young scoundrel. When we add that he parted his hair in the middle, wore the tallest collars, the flashiest neckties, rimless eyeglasses and a diamond wherever he could put one, no more need be added to perfectly picture him to the reader's eye.

"Jim! Stop that infernal sweeping!" he said, angrily banging the door.

"Yo' fader tolle me fer to sweep out every morning fust t'ing, Mass' Joe! Didn't 'spec' you'd come down seven o'clock nohow!"

Joe Runk made as though he would strike with his cane.

"You impudent nigger, get out of here and take your broom with you!" he shouted. "There's a friend of mine at the door there. Open it and let him in and keep out yourself till I tell you to come back."

Now, under these circumstances, it was not to be supposed that Jim could consider poor Dan Denning in the closet, for Jim had his own job to look out for, and there was nothing for it but to obey. He opened the outer door, admitting a slim, seedy-looking young fellow, with a red head and a foxy eye.

"Come in, Byke," said Joe Runk. "Come in quick! The bookkeeper will be here in a minute. I want to have a word with you before he comes."

"That's all right, Joe. Fire away."

"Got anything in hand just now, Byke?"

"Nothing particular."

"I want you to undertake a little case for me, then."

"All right."

"You know that pretty little dame I was telling you about?"

"Yair—the little cloakmaker, Alice Gates."

"That's her."

"I know. Works for Schwartzenheimer & Lazarus."

"Yes. Byke, you know I've done everything in the world to make the girl consent to marry me."

"So you was telling me."

"I've sent her presents, invitations to the theater and to balls, but all no go."

"Presents came back?"

"Yes; and tickets, too; but that ain't the point."

"What is?"

"Byke, I've got a reason for following up that girl so close."

"Very likely."

"No, but a special reason."

"What is it?"

"It's just this: She's heiress to a thundering big fortune and she doesn't know it."

"Whew!"

"I know the whole inside history of the business. If Alice Gates can be produced at a certain place by to-morrow noon she's in it, and so am I, if I can make her my wife."

"Well, well!"

"It's a fact—a big thing."

"And what do you want of me?"

"I want you to help me capture the girl tonight when she leaves the cloak shop, and— By thunder, what's that?"

It wasn't much of anything; only a sneeze. But a sneeze heard behind a closet door when one thinks himself enjoying a private conversation, sometimes means a good deal. It meant so much to Mr. Joe Runk that he made one dash for the door and flung it wide open.

"Out of there! Come out of there, you young snoozer!" he roared, comprehending the situation at a glance.

He seized Dan by the ear, and dragging him out, began kicking the boy brutally.

"So you will sneak in through the window when you're too late for the gate, eh?" he shouted.

"By George! I'll learn you! Heard me coming and hid in the closet, eh? I'll break your neck for you, and that nigger, too!"

Now all this was very pleasant. Especially as every word was emphasized by a kick. For a moment Dan stood it, thinking of his mother and sister.

"Leggo! Leggo of me!" he shouted at last, trying to pull away.

But that hurt his ear. Another kick followed. That hurt, too.

"Look out!" cried Byke suddenly.

Too late to save the dude! With a sudden twist Dan Denning pulled himself away and turned upon the fellow with the utmost fury. Before Byke could pull him off, he had knocked out one of Mr. Joe Runk's teeth, blackened his eyes and laid him sprawling upon the floor. Then Byke got it. Byke foolishly tried to seize him. Dan butted Byke and sent him down on top of the dude. Then the luckless young working boy rushed from the office and hurried upstairs to his bench, where from early morning till late at night he toiled for the princely salary of three dollars a week.

"My head's off. But I must wait till they fire

me, for mother's sake," he thought. "But what is to be done about Alice Gates?"

Now Dan Denning knew the girl perfectly well. Why shouldn't he? He had lived on the same floor with her for two years. They had played together as children. So far as a boy of seventeen knows anything about love, Dan Denning was in love with Alice Gates. How could he warn her of the danger she was in? For another it would be easy enough. But Dan was only a New York working boy.

So long as there was the slightest chance of his keeping his position in the factory of Paddleford & Runk he dared not move from that bench. The day passed, but nothing was heard from Joe Runk. Dan began to think the dude was going to let the matter drop when at last, at about a quarter-past five, the room foreman passed him. He gave a curious glance at Dan, and said as he hurried by:

"Don't break your neck over that job, young fellow. It's your last day in this shop. You're to be bounced to-night."

Poor Dan! This meant possible starvation. The loss of a job is no joke for a New York working boy.

CHAPTER II.—A Big Find and a Bigger Surprise.

"Get out of my road, you young rascal! What do you mean by jumping in front of me like that?"

It was a pompous merchant from the wholesale dry goods district shouting angrily at a young working boy, who had suddenly darted in front of him at the corner of White street and Broadway. Merchant was turning out of White street—boy was running down Broadway. The result was a collision. The man of many dry goods seized the boy by the throat and shook him savagely, shouting as above. But working boys have some rights, which even the magnates of the dry goods district are bound to respect. The boy kicked and struck out. This would have amounted to nothing if the merchant had not happened at the same instant to slip on a piece of banana peel. Down he went with the boy on top of him.

"Give it to him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd.

"Puck him in de eye!"

"Knock his false teeth down his throat!"

"Swat him in de jaw!"

The advice was sympathetic but violent. The working boy had the crowd with him, but in a moment it was against him, for he lost no time in freeing himself, and then, instead of giving the big man the "sass" the crowd expected, he took to his heels and ran down Broadway as tight as he could go. A disgusted cry went up from the crowd and its sympathy flew over to the side of the rich man at once. But the boy never heeded the cries.

"Heavens! What shall I do if I'm too late?" he murmured, as he ran. "I don't know where she lives. I must catch her when she comes out, or not at all."

It was only Dan Denning looking for Alice Gates to warn her of the plot he had overheard,

The instant he realized the truth and knew that his job was actually gone, Dan made a bolt for the door. He did not even wait to gather up his things. He never heeded the call of his workmates to know what was the matter, but he just caught up his hat and rushed downstairs. You see, Alice had been on Dan's mind all day long. How to reach her had been the question.

As we said before, this would have been easy enough for another—so easy that it would have been done long ago. But it was not so with a working boy. It was the same now. Dan had no money. Not one cent. From the corner of Fourth street and Eleventh avenue to Broadway and Worth street, where Schwartzenheimer & Lazarus kept their cloak factory, was a long pull.

It was a quarter past five then, and the cloak factory stopped work at six. No wonder Dan was in a hurry. No wonder he did not care to stop and have it out with the fallen dry goods merchant. He had run until he felt ready to drop, and now, just as he reached the door of Schwartzenheimer & Lazarus' establishment there were the cloak girls trooping out. Broadway was full of working girls and boys. The big workshops over the stores were discharging their human occupants in every direction. Poor Dan pushed into the doorway in despair.

"Is Alice Gates gone yet?" he panted, planting himself in front of a group of girls.

The girls, instead of answering, began to laugh and jibe him. One of them called him a "mud lark."

"Who's yer tailor?" tittered another.

"Oh, he's Alice's beau. Look at his frescoed pants!" screamed a third.

Now, for the first time, Dan realized that his roll on the sidewalk with the big dry goods man had plastered him with mud from head to foot. The girls went by tittering and jibing him. But the next bevy of cloak maidens to descend the stairs were kinder to poor Dan.

"She's gone," said a black-eyed Jewess. "Say, sonny, if I was you I'd wash my face."

This was a crusher. Dan managed to work his way past the girls up to the cloak shop. He wanted to find out where Alice Gates lived, but in this he did not succeed. But the errand boy of the working floor told him that it was somewhere over in "Sheeneytown" that Alice had her room. Dan promptly started for "Sheeneytown," which, in New York parlance, is the region around Hester, Ludlow, Essex and Canal streets. As he was walking up Broadway a bootblack jumped out from a doorway near White street and stopped him. It was now dark, and knowing that Joe Runk and Byke had threatened to waylay Alice on her road home, Dan felt very much concerned.

"Hold up!" cried the bootblack.

"Don't bother me," said Dan, trying to push past him.

He thought it was his dirty condition that had attracted the boy's attention and tried to shake him off. But the boy wouldn't be shaken.

"Say, ain't you der feller wot was knocked down by dat rich bloke?" asked the boy, as soon as he made Dan understand that it was not the nickel he was after.

"Yes. Did you see me?"

"Why, ter be sure. T'ought I knowed yer. I've been a-layin' for yer, young feller."

"What do you want? I'm in an awful hurry."

"Well, keep yer shirt on! So am I. Haven't I got an appointment to black Tony Pastor's boots at seven o'clock? Oh, no; not much! Say, hold up, will yer?"

"Can't stop!"

"But yer must! If 'twas anybody but me, he'd get mad at yer. Say, did yer drop dis?"

It was a fat pocketbook the bootblack slyly displayed, slightly opening his own ragged coat. The truth flashed over Dan in an instant. The old man who had run into him had dropped it. Better that he should take it than leave it with the bootblack, he thought first. But when he thought second he determined to tell the truth.

"No, I didn't, but I bet yer the old man did."

"Jes' wot I war a-thinking. Yer honest, an' I knowed it, and so am I. Say, his name's in de pocketbook. Read it for a feller, will ye?"

Thoroughly interested now, Dan followed the boy into a dark doorway. Out came the pocketbook. It was stuffed with money. Some of the bills were for \$500, others for \$1,000. On the inside leather of the pocketbook was written, or rather pen-printed, "Theodore Gates."

This reminded Dan of Alice.

"Say, what's your name?" he asked hurriedly.

"Pat Sweeney."

"Pat, you come along with me; I've got something I must attend to. Then we'll look up this Mr. Gates."

"Will yer help me?"

"Yes."

"Yer know him, don't yer?"

"He'll know me," said Dan evasively, for he saw that Pat was laboring under a delusion, and truth told, Dan was anxious to get some of the reward which he felt sure the return of the pocketbook would bring.

Pat listened to the proposition. They went to "Sheeneytown" together, but all Dan's efforts to gain a clue to Alice's whereabouts were unavailing. About half-past seven he gave it up and hurried with Pat to the first drugstore they came to when they came to the Bowery. Here Dan consulted a directory.

"Gates, Theodore, dry goods, — White street. House, — Fifth avenue," was readily found.

Dan communicated his discovery to Pat. Together they went to the big Fifth avenue mansion and boldly pulled the bell. To Dan's utter amazement the door was instantly opened, and he found himself face to face with no less a person than Mr. Joe Runk.

It was the dude who had plotted against Alice—who was responsible for his own discharge.

"Well, what do you boys want?" he demanded, in a loud, supercilious tone.

"We found this. It belongs to Mr. Gates," Pat blurted out, putting the pocketbook into Joe's hand. He did not seem to recognize Dan. Runk put the pocketbook into his own pocket, saying:

"You'll get no reward from Mr. Gates. He's dead." Then he shut the door in the boys' faces. There was nothing to do for Dan but to go home then.

The next morning Dan went to the cloak factory to find Alice Gates. Just as he got to the door Dan saw Alice being escorted out of the entrance and to a hack standing at the door of the cloak factory. A woman sprang out of the

hack as Alice approached the carriage. Alice started back, but the man who was with her grabbed her arm. "You'll not escape me this time!" he said. Alice struggled and screamed. Dan flew in pursuit and struck the man. Then the woman went to the man's assistance. Then the man's green goggles fell from his eyes. The man was Joe Runk's friend Byke. Like lightning the man sprang into the hack into which the woman had pulled Alice. The next instant the hack rolled away before the eyes of the onlookers, not a finger being raised in interference.

Dan then did a wise thing. Finding out the address of Mr. Gates's business office, he flew around there, only to find the place open, which Dan thought would not be so if the man had died. Walking in, he suddenly saw coming down the aisle Joe Runk and another man. Dan darted, unperceived, behind a packing box at one side. The two came up to that very box and stopped. Dan heard every word they said.

He learned that Byke had the girl and that Joe intended to marry her that night in Mr. Gates's house at midnight. Mr. Gates was in Philadelphia, and was not expected home before the next day. After the wedding they were going to burglarize Mr. Gates's safe. Then they walked out of the store. Dan also took his departure.

CHAPTER III.—The Luck of the Hoisting Wheel.

"Hello, Pat!"

"Hello, young feller! Back again?"

"Back again."

"Did you see Mr. Gates?"

"No."

"Is he dead?"

"Dead—no. He's in Philadelphia."

Dan had made sure of this before leaving the store of Gates & Co., for he had inquired of one of the porters on the sidewalk. He had asked the porter something else, too. It was the name of the young dude, who at that moment came out of the store in company with Joe Runk. He was informed that the individual in question was none other than Harry Gates, son of the proprietor of the store. Thus Dan saw that there could be no mistaking the significance of what he had overheard.

"In Philadelphia!" exclaimed Pat. "That knocks you out."

"No, it don't, either. I'm going to telegraph him."

"Telegraph him!"

"Yes."

"What?"

"No matter. I can't explain."

"You found out something?"

"Yes."

"Tell a feller."

Dan told him all, word for word. Pat was greatly excited.

"Say, I wouldn't telegraph him. I'd go to Philadelphia an' see him if it was me."

"How can I go to Philadelphia when I haven't got any money?"

"If you telegraph him, he'll think it's a fake."

"Oh, I'll see the police and get them to do it."

"Don't yer do it—don't yer do it!" cried the

bootblack earnestly. "I know a feller what did that very same thing."

"What thing?"

"Overheard about a robbery and went to ther police. Before he cud get out of the station house they nabbed him. That there feller was in der House of Detention three months, an' his old mother starved to death—so she did. Don't yer do such a thing."

"But I've got to do something, Pat."

"You go to Philadelphia and see the bloke, that's what to do."

"What's the use talking?"

"Oh, dere's a blame sight of use. Look here."

"What?"

"Dis."

Pat drew Dan into a doorway, and out of some hole in his rags pulled a dirty railroad ticket.

"Great Scott! An excursion ticket to Philadelphia!"

"Yair."

"Where did you get it?"

"Found it in front of Johnson, de scalper's office, de other morning; it got swept out."

"Will you give it to me?"

"I'll bet yer I'll give it to you, Dan. Go over an' see de bloke an' whack up with me what yer git. Besides, dat's de easiest way fixin' about de gal."

It seemed a bold move for a boy like Dan Dening, who had never been outside of New York in his life. Yet this was just the move he finally determined to make. In company with Pat he went into the office of the Pennsylvania Railroad and consulted a time table. Pat had assured him that there would be no trouble in going to Philadelphia and being back again long before midnight. Dan had at first not been able to credit this, but he found it was so.

"By George, I'll do it!" he exclaimed, as they came out of the railroad office. "Pat, you're the best friend a fellow ever had. I'll go straight to Philadelphia, see Mr. Gates, and tell him the whole story. If he won't help me, I'll come right back and go to the police."

Acting on this resolutuion, Dan crossed the Desbrosses street ferry and found himself in time for the noon train. It was a new experience for our New York working boy to be whirling along at the rate of forty miles an hour, and his spirits rose to the highest pitch. He would rescue Alice; he would put her in the way of obtaining this mysterious fortune; he would surely be well rewarded by Mr. Gates for saving his safe from being robbed; he would get square with Joe Runk; he—but there was no end to Dan's castles in the air.

It was all very fine while the train was going, but when he found himself walking down Chestnut street, confused by the strangeness of his surroundings, he began to wonder what he would say to Mr. Gates, and whether the rich man would thank him for exposing his own son as a thief and a scoundrel. The nearer he approached the store of Bassett & Co., the bankrupt firm, whose address he had obtained from the porter, who had told him where Mr. Gates was, the more his spirits fell, until, when he reached the door, his heart beat so violently that he scarcely dared go in. But it must be done.

He had not come all the way from New York

to turn faint-hearted at the last moment. Bassett & Co. turned out to be a cloak firm, which made Dan think of Alice and become all the more determined to put his undertaking through. There was a large store floor downstairs and workrooms above. The store was partly closed, and there was a notice on the door informing the public that the assignee was then engaged in taking stock. Dan opened the door timidly and stepped in.

"Get out of here! Can't come in here!" snapped a man who sat in a chair near the door.

"I want to see Mr. Gates, of New York, on very important business," faltered Dan.

The man surveyed the boy from head to foot.

Poor Dan's rough working suit and cheap colored shirt did not recommend him. Still the watchman—for such was the man's position—did not exactly like to turn him away unheard, for Mr. Gates happened to be the most important creditor of the bankrupt firm, and for that reason had more to say even than the assignee.

"What do you want to see him for?" he demanded roughly.

"It's private business, and very important, sir. I hope you'll let me see him. I've come a long way."

"He's very busy upstairs in the factory. You might wait here till he comes down."

"How long will that be?"

"How can I tell? He might be down in ten minutes, and he mightn't be down for an hour."

"Couldn't I go up?"

"Does he expect you?"

"No, sir."

"Then you can't go up."

"Hey, Mac! Mac! Come here a minute, will you?" suddenly called a voice from the rear office.

The watchman arose and hurried back to the office. Now right in front of where Dan stood was the stairs. It took just about half a minute to settle it. Dan looked at the stairs. It was too tempting. Crouching down so that the watchman, if he happened to look back, could not see him, Dan ran nimbly up. No one interfered. In a moment he was on the top floor. Over near one of the front windows of the loft several gentlemen stood talking. Everything was in confusion. Great piles of goods were scattered about, but there was no one else visible except these men. As Dan approached the group he recognized, in a large, portly gentleman who was standing directly beneath a big wooden hoisting wheel with iron cogs, the very man who had run against him on Broadway. He was talking rapidly and seemed excited. Nobody paid the least attention to Dan, and he stood waiting for a chance to speak. At length the conversation ended, and one of the gentlemen, turning to Dan, asked him roughly what he wanted.

"I want to see Mr. Gates a minute."

"Me!" cried the big man.

"Yes, sir. I want to speak to you in private," stammered Dan.

"Why, bless my soul! If it ain't the little rascal who stole my pocketbook in New York yesterday!" cried Mr. Gates, who was one of those men who never forgot a face.

"I didn't steal your pocketbook, sir," flushed Dan. "You dropped it, and—"

"You little liar! What in the world brought you here?" cried the merchant. "Have you come to give it back?"

"I took it back to your house last night, sir, and gave it to Joe Runk."

"Runk—Runk! Don't know any such person. What brought you to Philadelphia? What do you mean by following me here if you haven't come to give my pocketbook back?"

"If you will let me speak privately to you, sir, I will tell you. I—"

"Nonsense! Nonsense! If you've got anything to say, say it, and if it ain't mighty straight I'll call a policeman and have you arrested. I— Let go of me. Let—"

Suddenly Dan darted forward, and seizing Mr. Gates by the arm, jerked him from his position with all the strength he could muster. At the same instant a sharp, cracking sound was heard, followed by a fearful crash.

The heavy hoisting wheel, detaching itself from its fastenings for some unexplained reason, came whirling down, striking the floor at the precise spot where Mr. Gates had stood. So great was the force of the fall that it broke through the trapdoor—for this part of the floor was nothing else—and went crashing through before any one could utter a word.

CHAPTER IV.—Is It Too Late?

"Young man, you have saved my life. I owe you a debt which I can never hope to repay."

Spoken by a millionaire merchant to a working boy, what more delightful words than these can possibly be imagined? If it had not been for poor Alice, Dan would have been wild with joy. Even as it was, his head was all in a whirl.

"I only did my duty, sir," he replied respectfully.

"Your duty! Was it your duty to risk your own life to save me at the very moment when I was unjustly accusing you and threatening you with arrest?"

"Yes, sir; I think so."

"Perhaps you're right—perhaps you're right. You're a smart boy. I shan't forget this. I shall do my duty, too, no matter on whose head the blow falls. Ah, I could wish that you were my son instead of— But no matter. Here, take my card. Go to the Bingham House and tell them to treat you well. I will finish up here and be along by and by."

"You—you will go to New York, sir?"

"Go! Of course I'll go. Alice Gates is my niece. True, I quarreled with her father years ago, but that must make no difference in a case like this. To think that my own son— But no matter. He is fully capable of any mean and selfish crime. Go, boy; go now. We will surely be at my house in time."

By all of which it will be seen that Dan had had his little private talk with Mr. Gates, and with most excellent results. It took time for the gentlemen in the loft to recover from the excitement of the accident. It took more time for Dan to gain Mr. Gates's ear. The amazement and rage of the merchant were past all bounds.

Mr. Gates was a shrewd man, and once his at-

tention was fairly attracted he sized Dan up in short order, and made up his mind that the boy was telling the truth. We need not dwell upon all that was said. The long and short of it was that Mr. Gates was a rich widower with one son, and that one a very bad specimen. While the cat was away the mice had been playing in the Gates mansion with a vengeance. Mr. Gates had come over to Philadelphia the night before, being on his way to the train, in fact, when he ran into Dan. He had missed his pocketbook when he went to buy his ticket, but great as its contents seemed in the eyes of Dan and Pat Sweeney, they were not sufficient to delay Mr. Gates in his journey. He had been intending to take the matter up upon his return, which, but for Dan's arrival, would not have taken place until the following day.

Dan now hurried to the Bingham House, where he got away with a supper which made the waiter stare. At seven o'clock Mr. Gates came hurrying in.

"We take the eight o'clock train, Dan," he said, as the boy arose to meet him. "I may not see you again, but you be at the depot. I'll meet you there. Here, let me give you money for your ticket."

"I have my ticket, sir."

"Take it—keep it. It'll cover your expenses."

Mr. Gates flung him a twenty-dollar bill and hurried away. It was more money than Dan had ever had at one time before. Already honesty and energy were beginning to pay. Mr. Gates was at the depot on time, and they were soon whirling away toward New York. On the train the whole matter was gone over again, Mr. Gates inquiring most minutely about every detail, but saying nothing as to what he proposed to do. As soon as they came off the ferryboat a hack was called and away they went uptown. Not a word was spoken until they crossed Fifty-ninth street at Fifth avenue. It was then nearly eleven o'clock.

"Dan!" said Mr. Gates suddenly.

"Sir?"

"We'll soon be there."

"Yes, sir."

"I shall soon know whether you've been lying or not."

"I have told the truth, sir."

"I believe it, and if I prove it you'll live to bless the day when you proved to me that there is some honesty still left in the world."

"I've only done what I thought was right, sir. But ain't you going to do something about the robbers?"

"Why, bless your soul, boy, I settled that matter by telegraph hours ago! There's half a dozen detectives in my store by this time. Let them come; they'll find me ready. But here we are."

Thrusting his head out of the window, Mr. Gates called to the driver to stop.

"This ain't the house, sir."

"No; we'll walk the rest of the way."

Taking Dan's arm, Mr. Gates hurried him up the avenue.

"The rascals! Oh, the rascals!" he muttered, as they came opposite the house.

The parlors were brilliantly lighted, and young men in evening dress could be seen moving behind the lace curtains; but no ladies were visible.

"He has filled the house with his dissolute companions," muttered Mr. Gates. "Let's see; what time did they say the marriage was to take place?"

"At midnight, sir."

"All right, my boy. We'll surprise 'em. Come, Dan. Great heavens! I only wish you were my son instead of that miserable skunk."

"Next thing I know, he'll be wanting to adopt me," thought Dan, as Mr. Gates hurried him around the corner.

But his mind was principally upon Alice. Was she then in the house? Would they be in time to save her from being forced into a marriage with Joe Runk? Such were Dan's thoughts when Mr. Gates opened a little gate in the wall on the side street.

"Come, Dan!"

Dan slipped through. The gate was locked behind them.

"This way," whispered the merchant, leading Dan up the steps which communicated with the conservatory.

At the same instant a wild scream rang out. It seemed to come through an open window in the conservatory.

"Help! Save me! Help!"

"There she is!" cried Dan. "Hurry, Mr. Gates! Hurry! That's Alice's voice!"

"Hush!" said Mr. Gates. Let us look through this window.

There was a band playing in the parlor. They looked and saw a crowd of dissipated young bloods. Joe Runk was there, and so was Harry Gates. Alice was crouching at the foot of an imitation banana tree in the front of the room. A clergyman stood by with a book in his hand. Then Mr. Gates opened the door and with Dan rushed into the room. At the sight of the merchant all hands bolted out the front way. Alice swooned away and Dan carried her to a settee, in the library, and went back to Mr. Gates, who was storming away at a great rate in the parlor. Mr. Gates asked where he had taken Alice. Both now went into the library. Alice was gone. Something told Dan she was being carried away. Dan rushed to the door whereby they had entered from the side entrance, and saw Alice being taken out on the side street by Byke and Harry Gates. Pointing them out to Mr. Gates, who was now right behind them, he sprang out of the door after the villains.

CHAPTER V.—Sold Again.

Dan Denning got to the garden gate just in time to see a carriage go rolling away. The curtains were drawn, and the driver lashed his horses into a run. Harry Gates and Byke were nowhere to be seen. Dan made a bolt for the carriage, which was an old-fashioned affair, and had a place for trunks behind. If the driver knew he was coming he did not show it by any sign. He never looked around. Had he done so, he would have seen our New York working boy flying down the street for all he knew.

Dan could hear Mr. Gates roaring out behind him as he ran. The hour was late, and the side

streets quiet. But when the carriage turned into Fifth avenue there were the other carriages in which the dudes had come to Joe Runk's wedding on ahead. Had they been behind, they would have seen little Dan Denning "cut behind."

Crack! crack! crack! The lash of the driver's whip curled everywhere except around Dan's legs and body. The boy had cut behind too often in the past not to know just how it was done. At last the driver became satisfied that no one was there, and gave it up. Dan had an easier time of it after that. Of course he could only hold on. He rather expected to hear from Mr. Gates in some way, however. He had a vague idea that the merchant would manage to get hold of another carriage and follow. Or that he would telephone to some policeman in some way who would head them off. Nothing of this kind occurred. As soon as they had gone a short distance down the avenue the driver slackened speed, and they went along at a more leisurely pace. Dan managed to get a more comfortable hold on the straps. He could bring his face up against the little window in the back of the coach now. But he could not see anything, for the curtain was across the window. And thus the carriage rolled on downtown. Dan saw that all he could do was to stick to the carriage and note what the end was, unless he saw a policeman upon whom he could call for help. But strangely enough he saw no policeman until they got over on Broadway. He knew enough not to expect any help from the average Broadway cop.

If he called, the chances are he would be arrested. He did not call, and no one disturbing him in his seat, the carriage took him away downtown. The carriage turned west at Canal street. Dan was getting about discouraged, when all at once a boy came running after the carriage and jumped up on the straps behind him. It was Pat.

"Great Scott! What are you doing here, Dan?" he exclaimed.

"She's inside, Pat?"

"What?"

"Alice!"

"No!"

"Yes, she is."

"Tell a feller."

"Hold on! There he goes around into West Broadway."

The carriage now turned and almost immediately it turned again into the little street that runs against the rear wall of St. John's Church, and here it stopped in front of the door of a stable.

"Holy smoke! They're stopping," whispered Dan.

"Slide off!" said Pat. "Scoot behind them boxes across the street."

There was a pile of empty packing cases on the other side of the way, and the boys were behind them in a twinkling.

"Hey! Hello! Open the door!" yelled the driver.

There was no answer. Then the driver got off the box, and picking up a handful of gravel, threw it against the window. Instead of waiting to see what the effect would be, he deliberately opened the door of the hack, pulled up the cur-

tains, and taking the cushions out, flung them down beside the stable door.

"Well, I swanny!" gasped Dan. "Kick me, Pat—kick me hard!"

"There ain't nobody in that hack," said Pat.

It was painfully evident that this was the truth. Just then the door of the stable opened, and the hack was driven inside.

"Come," said Dan. "I'm going away from here. Pat Sweeney, I'm the sickest boy there is this side of Oshkosh, you bet."

"How did it happen? Tell me all about it, Dan," persisted Pat. "I s'posed you'd look me up as soon as you got back from Philadelphia."

Dan told as much of his story as he could. They were close to the elevated station at Franklin street when he got through.

"They knowed you'd follow the hack, that's why they did it. Say, Dan, they're a blame sight sharper than you are, and don't you forget it. But how about the burglars?"

"Bless my soul, Pat, this must be just about the time!"

"Right you are."

"Mr. Gates has detectives watching the place."

"Let's come round and see what we can see. I'd like the fun."

"Pat, do you never go home?" asked Dan, as they walked along.

"Well, once in a while. I prefer the streets on a pleasant night."

"You have no home?"

"Oh, yes; but I never go there. De ole man's full most all de time an' me own mudder's dead dis t'ree years. I— Hold up! We're right in it. There's some of them detectives now."

They had come almost to Mr. Gates's store. On the side of the street on which they were walking a new building was being erected, and a big pile of bricks from the old building which had been removed was close before them. There were two men leaning against the bricks talking in an undertone. Fortunately Pat caught sight of them in time to pull Dan around behind the pile.

"Listen to de dude!" he whispered. "He was a-pointing to de store. It may be—"

"Hush up!" breathed Dan. "It's Harry Gates."

"The deuce you say!"

"It is. Come here and don't you breathe."

Dan rushed around on the other side of the brick pile, Pat following. Soon they were where they could hear the voices of the two men, and that with no risk of being seen.

"I've got rid o' 'em all, Harry," the man was saying. "I made 'em believe that I know'd the scheme had been given up."

"Good for you!"

"Yair. 'Twas done pretty slick. How much are yer going to give a feller?"

"Wait till my partner comes."

"You'll crack the crib?"

"Certainly."

"Good enough! What'll yer give me?"

"What do you expect?"

"A third."

"Too much."

"A third an' I'm wid ye. Anything less an' I split."

"A third let it be, then. Hark! Here comes Joe."

"Great Scott!" thought Dan. "This is a pretty state of affairs. I'm just here in time."

As soon as Joe Runk appeared the burglars started to enter the store. Dan and Pat began to call out "Robbers—thieves!" and to fire bricks at them from the brick pile, whereupon the thieves took to their heels. Just then a hack drove up and out of it stepped Mr. Gates. All was then explained to him. He was astonished to learn that his son was one of the party, but congratulated both of the boys and promised to look after them in the future.

CHAPTER VI.—The Changes of Three Years.

Dan!"

"Sir?"

"I have done it."

"No!"

"I have. I have sold out the last dollar of my interest in the old business, and you and I will turn bankers just as soon as arrangements can be made."

"But, Mr. Gates! This is too much. I—I don't deserve—"

"Shut up! You have nothing whatever to say about the matter. You deserve all you'll get. Now go to work and see about that business I spoke of yesterday."

Two years and ten days had passed since the night of the attempted burglary in Mr. Gates' store. Two years which had brought strange changes to Dan Denning. No longer can our hero be called a New York working boy, in one sense of the word. Yet for all that, Dan had never worked so hard in his life as during those same two years. Mr. Gates had made up his mind to adopt Dan as his son.

It was the boy's own mother who informed him first of the proposed change, and told him of the liberal provision the merchant proposed to make for herself and children in case the plan was carried out. Then came Mr. Gates himself and confirmed it all.

Harry Gates had left New York, for where no one knew. Joe Runk was in prison. But as yet Alice had not yet been found. Mr. Gates had spent money and time in the search until he was tired, and at last had given it up. And so Dan went to live in the big house on Fifth avenue, and a very delightful thing he found it, too.

All reference to the past was dropped. Mr. Gates sent him one year to a private school of great excellence, and then provided tutors at home for the second year. Dan always supposed he was to go into the dry goods business after his education was complete. But Dan never handled dry goods. He never dreamed of such a change as this. Another year flew by. Gates & Denning, bankers and brokers, was now a well-known firm.

"Good-by, Dan! I'm going home," said Mr. Gates, one afternoon in April, after the banking business had been running about a year.

Dan, who had just come in from the Exchange after an unusually hard day's work, looked up from the desk at which he was figuring.

"Don't you feel well, sir?"

"Oh, yes. A little discouraged, that's all."

"Discouraged! Why, business is booming. We have done splendidly the last few weeks."

"Oh, it ain't that, Dan."

"What, then?"

"About Alice. My conscience pricks me. I ought not to have left my brother's child in poverty."

"You've done all you could to find her, sir."

"I know—I know! I've begun again. I'll tell you some time. By the way, are you coming home to dinner?"

"I am not certain."

"Do as you like. I don't want to tie you down, my boy," said Mr. Gates, as he left the office.

Dan finished his figuring, and struck the electric bell alongside the desk. Immediately a polite clerk was at his side.

"Say to Mr. Sweeney that I'd like to see him."

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk, and he noiselessly withdrew.

Immediately a well-dressed young gentleman, with a fiery red head, came in. He had a pen behind his ear, and he looked what he was, one of the clerks of Gates & Denning's establishment.

"Hello, Pat!"

"Did you want to see me, Dan?"

"Yes. Did you get them?"

"You bet!"

"Very well. Have the coupe here at five. I've got a lot of work to do yet. We'll dine at Delmonico's and take in the little beauty afterward. How does that strike you?"

Now, there was no need of asking the question. Anything that struck Dan Denning as being right and proper always struck Mr. Pat Sweeney, the assistant bookkeeper, in the same way. Shortly after five Mr. Denning and his red-headed clerk entered the coupe and were whisked away up Wall street. They passed directly by two low-browed, dissipated-looking fellows who stood near the door of the big building in which the banking office was located. They never even looked at them, but they were very closely eyed by the two men as they came out.

"Well, there he goes, Harry," said one of the pair, as the coupe rolled away.

"Yes, blame him! Do you s'pose I'm blind?"

The other shrugged shoulders.

"No, I don't suppose you're blind; but, blame me, if I'd stand it! He's nothing but a common working boy, and here are you a beggar, while he's living on the fat of the land."

Such were the changes of three years. But where was the fortune Dan was fighting for? It had vanished with Alice Gates; no one knew how or where.

CHAPTER VII.—A Blazing Star.

"There she is! Hark! don't you hear her? Was there ever such a voice!"

It was Pat Sweeney who spoke—and we want it to be understood that Pat was as fine a young gentleman as one could meet in a day's walk as in company with Dan he entered the parquet of the old playhouse, Niblo's Garden. Before Dan could answer—before he could do more than catch sight of the petite figure upon the stage whose wonderful voice had taken all New York

by storm, the audience broke into thunderous applause.

"So that's your famous beauty, is it?" asked Dan languidly, when the friends found themselves seated in the stage box on the left.

"Yes; that's Pepita! Ain't she glorious?"

"Well, I didn't see enough of her to judge. She has a charming voice, however."

"Pshaw! You heard as little of her voice as you saw of her face. Wait till she comes on in the second act, and if you don't fall head over ears in love with her, my name is not Sweeney—that's all."

"I'm not sure that I care about falling in love, Pat. I'm comfortable as I am."

"By gracious, you're right there, Dan. If it's going to make any trouble between you and the old man, don't do it."

"Oh, it wouldn't do that. He interferes with me in nothing, Pat. No father could be kinder."

"She's coming!" exclaimed Pat at last, for he had seen the opera before.

And she came. It was a revelation of beauty. As Pepita bounded upon the stage and threw her whole soul into her voice, the same thunderous applause greeted her, but, to Pat's surprise, Dan sat staring dumbly.

"Look, Pat! Look! Don't you see who it is?"

"Why, Pepita! Great heavens! She knows you!"

It was so! The eyes of the star wandering toward the box as she sang, lit up with strange fire. She sang on—sang as she never sang before—sang until the whole vast assemblage seemed to rise as one man. Cheers upon cheers—applause which fairly shook the walls of the old playhouse followed. Yet the eyes of Pepita seemed to seek only the stage box on the left.

"Dan! Dan! Speak! What is it?" pressed Pat, for Dan was applauding like a madman now.

He had begun the instant the voice ceased. He did not seem to know where to stop even now that Pepita had left the stage.

"Dan! Dan! Control yourself. You must stop! Tell me what it means! Everybody is looking at us!" exclaimed Pat, seizing his hands.

"Pat, it's Alice! Alice! Oh, won't Mr. Gates be glad!"

"No!"

"But it is! You never saw her, but do you suppose I could forget?"

"I declare she seemed to know you."

"Oh, it's Alice! Go out like a good fellow and buy the handsomest bouquet you can find. I'll throw her a note with it, or my name's not Denning. I must know what this means."

Well used to being made an errand boy of, Pat speedily departed, but in a short time was back again with the bouquet. Dan had the note all ready, but following Pat's advice waited for the end of the third act before making the attempt. It was the scene in a burning forest—very startling—something very unusual for opera bouffe. To be sure, there was only one tree which took fire, and the whole thing was over in an instant, for as the burning limb falls upon the heroine the curtain comes down.

"Just the time to fling the bouquet," declared Pat.

Dan thought so, too, and was ready. The forest is resounding with the trills of the songs-

tress. The villain creeps in and fires the wood. Suddenly she discovers it, and screams. The tree is in a blaze. Branch after branch falls—they are only painted. Pepita flies hither and thither—there is no escape. None, because the particular branch which caps the climax has not fallen yet.

"Now, then, Dan! Be all ready!" breathes Pat.

All at once the burning branch falls. Something is wrong. It is actually blazing. Some Pepita. Her gauze dress catches. There is a flash—a scream. The star is wrapped in flames.

"Fire! Fire!" shrieks a voice among the gods.

On all sides the cries ring out, when suddenly a young gentleman springs from the private box on the left. He strikes the stage fairly on his feet and, tearing off his coat, wraps it round the blazing form. But will he save her? At first the house resounds with cheers. But now—see—the fire has mastered the coat!

"Dan! Save me, Dan!"

The appeal is heard as the curtain falls. Did it come too late? Those nearest the stage could see that the young man's arms were flung about that which looked like a mass of flame.

CHAPTER VIII.—Strange Disappearance of the Star.

"Alice—Alice! Don't hold on to me! Lie down! I will save you! Lie down!"

It was thus Dan Denning shouted as the curtain fell. He was holding Pepita, wrapped in his coat, at arm's length. The light clothing of the star had already set fire to the coat. There was danger of a general conflagration. Actors and supes were crowding around them. Even the stage manager was on hand, doing more harm than good, shouting for fire extinguishers and help, rushing about here and there and doing nothing but to make a noise. But Dan was as cool as the proverbial cucumber. He saw that the girl's only chance was to lie down and roll upon the hard board floor of the stage and thus extinguish the flames.

"Lie down, Alice—lie down!" he repeated.

She heard and understood him. Her fright had prevented her from doing it when he first shouted. Flinging herself flat on the stage, she rolled over and over. This did the work. In a moment the flames were extinguished. One of the women of the chorus now rushed forward and threw a cloak over the shuddering star as Dan tenderly raised her. The other women pressed around her, and she was hurried away, leaving Dan with his clothes ruined and his hands badly burned.

"Thank you, sir—thank you! You have performed a noble action," said the stage manager, rushing up to Dan after returning from the front of the curtain, where he had quieted the audience in a neat little speech.

"I have done no more than any one else would do for an old friend," replied Dan quietly.

"Ah! Mademoiselle Pepita is a friend of yours?"

"She is—a very old friend."

"You are fortunate; you are the only man in New York who can claim her for a friend."

Before Dan could reply to this, a call boy came hurrying up to the stage manager with a note.

"Mademoiselle wants to see you!" exclaimed the manager, hastily glancing at its contents.

A moment later Dan was knocking on the door of the star's dressing room, whither he had been guided by the boy.

"Come in!"

It was Alice's well-remembered voice which called. When Dan entered he found her alone. She was dressed for the last act, and didn't appear to be injured in any way.

"Alice!"

"Oh, Dan, is it really you?"

"Look at me and see, Alice. You ought to be able to remember little Dan Denning."

"Remember Dan! As if I could ever forget! And here I owe my life to you once more."

"Are you badly burned, Alice?"

"My clothes were ruined, and see, some of my curls have gone; but, thanks to you, Dan, nothing worse."

"Thank Heaven for that. I knew you as soon as you came on the stage, Alice. Where have you been all these years?"

She eyed him strangely.

"Working for my living like an honest girl, Dan; but you, they tell me, have been adopted by my uncle. You are a rich man's son now, and no longer a working boy."

"I never worked so hard in all my life, Alice, as I do now."

"I should like to know all about it, Dan."

"And I am dying to hear all about you, Alice. When can I see you?"

"Never, Dan."

"Never! What can you mean?"

Rat-tat-tat! A knock at the door of the dressing room. Dan opened it.

"Time to go on!" shouted the call boy, thrusting in his head.

Alice was ready.

"I will let you know if the time ever comes when I can see and talk to you, Dan," she said, seizing both his hands. "Now, good-by, old friend. Go back to your box. Never mind those flowers. I cannot receive them. Good-by!"

She glided past him and was gone in an instant, leaving poor Dan in a state of mind better imagined than described. To make matters worse, the stage manager now appeared, and in the politest possible way informed him that he could not be permitted to remain behind the scenes. Dan accordingly returned to his box by a way the manager showed him. Of course he asked the manager the address of the charming Pepita.

"Upon my word, I don't know," was the answer. "Don't you?"

"If I did, I shouldn't inquire."

"It ought not to take a smart young fellow like you long to find out."

"What do you mean?"

"She leaves in a carriage, doesn't she? What's the matter with shadowing her? I wouldn't say that to every one, but you've a right to know if anybody has, it seems to me."

"Now, Dan thought so, too. So did Pat, whom he found waiting for him in the box. Of course the reception given the star was something tremendous. But it was nothing to what took place when Dan appeared in his box. Cheer after

cheer burst from the vast assemblage. They clapped and stamped and shouted.

"Speech! Speech!" shouted a voice from the gallery at last.

"Come out of there!"

"Show yourself!" other voices yelled, until the confusion became so great that it was impossible for the performance to go on, and the manager hurried to the box to beg Dan to come to the front. But he found the box empty. Dan and Pat had quietly slipped out and were even then hurrying to the street.

"Are you going to take the hint, old man?" asked Pat, when Dan had finished telling his story.

"You bet I am. How long before the opera will be over?"

"This is the last act. It will be about fifteen or twenty minutes."

Dan sprang into one of the hacks waiting in front of the Metropolitan Hotel.

"I want you to follow a carriage from the stage door," he said to the driver. "Ten dollars if you keep it in sight."

"All right, sir," replied the driver promptly.

"It's mighty strange she wouldn't tell you where she lived, I say," declared Pat, "after all the time and money spent looking for her the last three years."

"There's some deep mystery about it, Pat, and I propose to fathom it."

Mystery there certainly was, and each turn made by the hack the mystery seemed to deepen. First it was Prince street; then it was the Bowery, finally it was Catherine street.

"She's going to Brooklyn by way of the Catherine ferry," declared Pat.

Naturally Dan agreed with him. But they soon found out their mistake. Halfway down the block below Monroe street the hack suddenly stopped. Dan's head was out of the window in an instant.

"What is it?" he asked of the driver, who was looking down from his box.

"Sure, she's gone in dere, sor," said the driver.

"Where?"

"There."

The driver pointed to a dirty alley leading in behind a low saloon. Dan leaped from the hack and ran to the entrance of the alley. He could see nothing of Pepita—he could not believe it. Yet there was her coupe turning. In a moment it rolled past him—empty.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the driver, looking back at Dan. "She's too much for yer, boss! You hain't de fust dude neither what she's given de slip."

CHAPTER IX.—Dan in a Trap.

"There she goes, Dan!"

"Start him, Pat. By gracious, if I don't head her off to-night, I'll know the reason why!"

The light coupe in which our two friends were seated rolled away from the stage door at Niblo's almost as Dan Denning uttered these words. Again they were following Pepita, the reigning star of the operatic world.

"I wonder where she takes us to-night?" remarked Pat, as he settled himself back for his drive.

"Who can tell?"

"Not you, I'll bet, or you wouldn't be here now."

"Exactly. I'm convinced, though, that we are going to have a change of luck to-night."

"Hope so, Dan, for your sake. You are positively getting thin over it."

"Pshaw! That's nonsense!"

"Not at all. I can tell by every word you speak and every movement you make how worried you are. By the way, have you told Mr. Gates about it yet?"

"No; he's too sick a man. It would only worry him and make matters worse."

"What does the doctor say?"

"Can't get any opinion out of him."

"Say, Dan, don't be mad if I ask you a question."

"Of course not. Do you suppose you could say anything to make me angry with you, Pat?"

"Well, then, here it is: Do you know how Mr. Gates's will stands?"

"Yes," replied Dan coolly. "I know just how it stands. Why do you ask?"

"How?"

"That I shan't tell you. To get angry because you asked would be foolish; to answer your question would be to break my faith with Mr. Gates. I— Hold on! She's out, by George!"

There had been more conversation between the friends than we have recorded here. Now suddenly the coupe stopped. Dan was out on the sidewalk in a twinkling. He knew perfectly well what the stopping meant. Several days had elapsed since Pepita vanished in the Catherine street alley. Three times after that Dan and Pat had followed the star, but each time with the same result. Not that the chase always led them to Catherine street. Each time it was a different place. The second night it was James street, near Cherry. The third night Cherry street, near James. The fourth night Oliver street, near Monroe. Now on the fifth night they were in Catherine street again.

Each time Alice Gates went up an alley and vanished. Each time she had entered her coupe richly dressed and left it in the attire of a working girl. Provided with his own coachman on this occasion, Dan was all ready for a repetition of these mysterious proceedings.

"Keep me in sight, but don't follow too close, Pat," he exclaimed, as he struck the sidewalk.

The instant the young men alighted the coupe moved right on down Catherine street. Without even stopping to look to see if he was observed by the driver of the star's retreating carriage, Dan glided into the alley, feeling pretty sure of success. He was too late to see Alice, however. Already the girl had vanished in her usual mysterious way. This did not bother Dan. He was prepared for it. He had already visited the place during the daytime and felt that he knew just what to expect. At the end of the alley were a number of tumbledown old frame buildings fronting on a little court. Dan stopped for nothing, not even to look back to see if Pat was following, but struck boldly through an open door leading under a flight of high wooden steps. He now found himself in a dark passage leading through into another court connecting by means of the alleys with Monroe street on one side and Oliver

on the other. The instant he entered this passage, Dan's ear caught the sound of quick footsteps ahead of him.

"She's there! By George, she's there!" he muttered. "I'll have her this time sure."

He hurried on, regardless of the fact that it was nearly midnight, and this one of the very worst slums in all New York. But Dan was dressed for the slums. Once more he had on the clothes of a working boy, although there had been no especial attempt at disguise. In a moment he emerged into the second court. Right ahead of him was a female figure, wearing an old waterproof cloak, hurrying into the alley which led to Oliver street. Dan made a dart and overtook her in the alley, where it would have been too dark to have distinguished her face even if it had not been concealed behind a thick, black veil.

"Alice—speak to me, Alice! Why do you avoid me?" pleaded Dan, laying his hand upon her arm.

"Why do you follow me when you know that I don't want you to?" asked the girl, in a suppressed voice.

But she paused and stood there without making any attempt to escape.

"Can you ask?"

"Have I not the right to ask?"

"I want to talk to you, Alice. We have been trying to find you for three years."

"But perhaps I don't want to be found."

"At least you can explain."

"Well, then, as long as you are so anxious, I'll do it. Come in here. This is where I live."

She turned aside into a dark doorway opening out of the alley.

Overjoyed at his success, Dan followed her.

"It's upstairs," she said. "Come right along."

She ran up two flights of stairs lightly and opened the door of a room.

"Walk in," she said, standing aside.

The room was dimly lighted. Dan stepped in, wholly unsuspecting of trickery. The instant he crossed the threshold two men sprang upon him. Whack! Whack! Twice struck over the head with a heavy sandbag, Dan Denning fell unconscious to the floor.

"That's the talk, Gussie!" breathed one of the masks. "You did it fine, old girl! Shut the door."

CHAPTER X.—Pat Meets An Old Friend.

Bang! Bang! Bang! It was neither a gun nor a pistol being exploded in the alley, but only Pat Sweeney pounding on a door. The door was the one through which Dan Denning had vanished. It had been shut and locked the instant the young man passed through. Pat, after waiting around the alley a full hour, had grown nervous. He began to wonder what had become of his friend. He began to feel afraid that all was not right. In short, he was determined to get in.

Not a soul had passed in or out of the alley since Pat saw Dan enter the door. The house was pitch dark. Some years before, Pat had lived around the corner. No one knew better than he did what a dangerous spot it was.

Bang! bang! bang! Undeterred by his want of success, Pat kept right on pounding. Crack! Suddenly a shot rang out upon the stillness of the night. It went whizzing past Pat's ear and

lodged in the top step of the stoop almost at his feet, plowing up a little furrow of chips.

"Hully gee!" gasped the ex-bootblack, dropping into the old slang which Dan had worked so hard to try to cure him of. It was too much for Pat. Since the days of the blacking boy he had never run so hard as he ran out of that alley then. He ran toward Oliver street, and, as it happened, he ran directly into an individual who was walking quietly past the entrance to the alley. There was a collision and a tumble. For a moment Pat forgot that he was bookkeeper for the highly respectable firm of Gates & Denning, Wall Street bankers, and used language which must have reminded him of the day of the blacking box and brush.

"Aw, dry up! Why don't yer look where yer goin'?" cried the overturned pedestrian, picking himself up out of the gutter, where his clothes could not have been much injured by the tumble, for he was already but little more than a bundle of rags.

"Great Scott! That you, Nosey?" cried Pat, scrambling up and staring at a boy of about his own age.

"Pat Sweeney! Well, I'll be blowed!"

"It ain't any one else, Nosey. Course I didn't mean to run into an old pal."

"Well, I don't care. I'm so blamed glad to see you, Pat, that I'll let you knock me down again if you want to."

"Which I don't."

"What are you doing here in them togs? Heard you was a banker on Wall street an' worth a million. What's de matter—did dem snoozers on the Stock Exchange clean you out?"

"No, no! Nosey, I'm in trouble."

"I should say so, from de way you was running."

"I'd just been shot at."

"Show me de bloke, an' I'll help you lay him out."

"Come here."

Nosey, who was still in the bootblacking business where Pat had left him three years before, slung his box over his back and started after Pat up the alley. But they did not go far. Pat paused at a very respectful distance from the mysterious house and pointed up to its darkened front.

"Say, Nosey, a friend of mine went in there after a girl. He's been gone an hour. When I knocked at the door to see what had become of him they shot at me out of the window. Now what kind of a crib is it, old man?"

"Blamed if I know, Pat, although me mudder lived on de top flure last year."

"You don't know who lives there now?"

"I seen two tough fellers going in and out dere this last three weeks. There was a gal, too. I dunno nothin' about dem, but I do know something else."

"What?"

"A way to get on de top fence of dat house widout nobody knowing nothing about it."

"How?"

"I'll show yer if yer wanter chance it."

"Yes—yes. Look here, Nosey, my friend is in trouble, and I'm sure of it. He's rich, too, and you won't lose nothing by it if you'll help me to find out what's wrong."

"I'll do it, Pat. Come on!"

WORKING BOY

Nosey hurried out of the alley and made a dive into a doorway alongside of a low Oliver street drinking den.

"What are you going in here for?" demanded Pat, who knew the bad character of the place perfectly well.

"Don't ax no questions, but you jest follow me, Patsy," whispered the bootblack.

Now Pat knew Nosey of old. More than that, he knew that he could trust him, so without another word he followed him through the door.

CHAPTER XI.—The Escape by the Roof.

"Run him in there! Chuck him on the bed!"

"Hush! Don't make so much noise."

"I'll make all the noise I please."

"But there's no telling who might have followed him. The police—"

"To the blazes with the police! There—throw him down—so! He'll keep for a while now till we can decide what to do."

The two men who had sandbagged Dan Denning in the upper room of the house in the alley threw our hero, still unconscious, upon a dirty bed which nearly filled the narrow space of a dark room between the front chamber in which he had been attacked and the room behind.

"Gussie, go and fetch a can of beer," ordered one of the pair. "Go out the back way; some one may be watching in front."

The woman in the waterproof seized a can and departed.

"Say, Joe, old Midwood is back from Australia again," he added.

"No!" cried the other, in evident amazement.

"Yes, he is."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"Still looking for Alice?"

"Yes."

"I wonder where she can be? Strange how she vanished, isn't it?"

"Very; but then she was always a strange girl, Joe."

"Right you are. We've looked for her everywhere and can't find her. Now here's this confounded old fortune come up again."

"Can't we collar it?"

"Easiest thing in the world if old Midwood only proves to be as big a fool as Dan Denning."

"Do you propose to try it?"

"I do. I propose to try it to-morrow. We'll fit the girl up and take her down and try to pass her off as Alice."

"A dangerous business."

"Not at all. He knows nothing of all that has happened since he was here before. He'll think it's all straight if we can only humbug him on the girl."

"And then?"

"Why, then, what's to hinder our getting the old duffer to make a will in Gussie's favor, and then—and then—"

"To give him a pill?"

"Precisely—several pills."

"Dangerous."

"Don't care. I want the money."

"Meantime, what are you going to do with Denning?"

"Do with him! Why, make the old man pay through the nose, to be sure. Hark! What was that?"

"Must be Gussie on the stairs."

"Come on! Don't let's stay here. Let's go in the other room and have our beer."

"Hold on! Ain't you going to tie him?"

"Aw, what's the use? He's knocked silly. We'll lock the door on him. Even if he comes to he can't do nothing without our hearing. Come on! We'll talk it over out there."

Thus saying, the two men left the room by way of the hall door, after having turned the key of the door of the dark room to make sure of poor Dan. But they never knew it was Dan, and not their friend Gussie, who had made the noise which had attracted their attention. If they had taken the trouble to look into the dark room a minute before they locked the door, they would have found Dan on his knees, peering through a crack in one of the panels. The fact is, Dan's head was hard. He only remained unconscious a moment or two after they laid him down on the bed. Hearing the voices, he had taken this method of finding out what they were talking about. He found out. Naturally it interested him greatly. Through the crack, also, he saw the faces of the two men as they removed their masks.

It did not surprise him a bit to see that he had fallen into the hands of his old enemies, Harry Gates and Joe Runk. What did surprise him was to find how easily he had walked into the trap set for him. To find that these scoundrels did not even guess he was following Alice, that the woman Gussie had simply chimed in with them when he called her Alice, without having the faintest idea what it all meant, beyond the fact that she had been set to decoy him into this house. Then there was the talk of Alice and the mysterious future. Dan was aroused by what he had heard.

"Good!" he murmured. "The fight for that fortune has begun again. I'll show you two fellows that I've got as much grit as ever. The first thing is to prevent them from locking me in."

This was the idea which came to Dan. Looking at the door, he found that the lock was on the inside. It was while fumbling about that he made the noise which attracted the attention of the two villains. Then came the retreat and the locking of the door, which did not disturb Dan one bit. As soon as they had departed he produced his knife.

It was a contrivance of many blades, and among the rest a screw-driver. It took just about two minutes for Dan to unscrew the lock and walk out into the room beyond. Here he tackled the door leading to the hall, but to his disgust discovered that in this case the lock was on the outside. He could do nothing with it, and he turned to the windows. Here new difficulties met him. The sashes were nailed firmly down, and to move them was simply impossible. To use Dan's own expression, he was completely "stumped," and for the next half hour or so he remained stumped.

The room was dark—he had no matches. There seemed to be no way out of his difficulty. Meanwhile he could hear loud talking and laughter in the room beyond the dark bedroom, leading to

which, quite contrary to the rule of New York tenements, there was no connecting door. What was to be done? What Dan did was to fume and fret like some caged tiger until at last he heard Joe or Harry returning. Then he did the most sensible thing to do under the circumstances—tumbled back on the bed, shut his eyes and lay perfectly still. It proved to be Joe, and he proved to be pretty drunk. He came staggering in with a lamp in his hand and bent down over the bed.

"By thunder, I believe he's dead!" he muttered. "Just as well, blame him! He's stood square in my road from the start. However, I may as well make sure."

He turned to set the lamp down upon a bureau which stood in one corner. Dan gave one leap from the bed the instant the lamp left his hand and seized him by the throat.

"You scoundrel! You dastardly villain!" he hissed, clapping one hand over Joe's mouth, while with the other he choked him almost into insensibility in a moment.

Joe gave one faint cry which ended up in a gasp and a gurgle. Dan dragged him to the bed and threw him down upon it, still squeezing the scoundrel's throat with all his might. Suddenly it occurred to him that he might go a step too far. Joe was already black in the face, and had ceased to struggle when Dan let go at last.

"Great heavens! Have I killed him?" thought the boy.

He caught up the lamp, and reversing the situation of the moment before, looked down on Joe. Certainly he looked like a man who had been choked to death. Dan was horror-stricken. The idea of having taken a life was overwhelming. He made a bolt out of the bedroom for the door. It would not open. Dan shook it. He saw at once that it was fastened by a spring lock.

"Hey, Joe—Joe! Where are you?" shouted a voice outside.

Footsteps were heard coming along the hall. Now, we hate to say it, but we must: The moment Dan heard that voice he lost his head. There was another door on his left, revealed by the lamp which he held. It opened at first touch. It was only a closet, but there was a ladder in the closet leading up to a scuttle, which, of course, connected with the roof.

"Joe! Joe! What in thunder is the matter in there?" yelled the voice.

At the same instant a furious knocking was heard on the street door below. Dan closed the closet door, and finding a key in the inside, softly turned it in the lock. Then he stole up the ladder and pushed aside the scuttle. He was none too soon. He heard the voice shouting—heard the door open and the man come in.

At the same instant the wind blew the light out. Bang! Bang! Bang! Fast and furious came the blows upon the outer door. Thrusting the extinguished lamp in under the eaves, Dan pulled himself up through the scuttle. To his horror, he found himself facing an old shingled roof, very steep, running down to vacancy on one side and against a building which stood a story higher on the other. There were windows in this building, and the roof ran right against them.

Bracing his feet against the scuttle frame, Dan started to run down the roof. In a twinkling he was on his back. His feet had slipped from

under him. Whiz! Bang! Crash! The next Dan Denning knew glass was breaking all around him and he was flying through the window at the end of the roof.

CHAPTER XII.—Fire—Still Fire.

"For goodness' sake, what's that?"

The shrill scream of a woman was the first thing that met Dan Denning's ears as the sound of the crashing glass ceased. Dan found himself sprawling upon the floor of a dark room. He had gone right through the window and landed on the broad of his back.

"Be quiet, mother! Be quiet!" he heard some one say.

"But, Alice, some one is breaking into the house. Help! Murder! Thieves!"

"Hush! Hush, mother! I'm not afraid. Wait and I'll see who it is."

Dan, scrambling to his feet, stood as one paralyzed. It was Alice Gates' voice which had spoken. He could hear some one coming from the adjoining room. The door opened suddenly and there stood the famous star, Pepita, with a lighted lamp in her hand. By pure accident Dan Denning had stumbled upon the secret that half the dudes in New York had been trying for months to possess themselves of. Dan did not know that he was not the only one by any means who had traced Alice to the different alleys and lost her there. It was a question which was the most amazed. Alice to behold Dan picking himself up from the remains of the shattered window, or Dan to find how unexpectedly he had stumbled upon the object of his search.

"Dan! For Heaven's sake!"

"Alice! You!"

"How dare you come here? How dare you break into my apartments?"

"Bless my soul! Why, it's Danny Denning!" exclaimed an old lady, looking over Alice's shoulder from the room behind.

"Leave this house at once, sir!" cried the star, waving her hand theatrically toward the door of the room.

"Alice, hear me!"

"Not a word! Go!"

"No!" cried Dan. "I will not go until I have spoken. Alice, I did not come here because I thought you were here. It was an accident. I did—"

"Go! I will not hear you!"

"You are in great danger, Alice. Trying to follow you, I fell into the hands of Joe Runk and Harry Gates. They are in that house there. They are plotting against you, Alice. There is a fortune belonging to you. They are trying to keep you out of it. Trust me and I will help you. I— Oh, what have I done—what have I done?"

Poor Dan! It seemed as if he was always putting his foot in it, so far as Alice was concerned. He spoke very rapidly, as a man will speak when determined to have his say, and now, right in the midst of his speech, Alice dropped to the floor in a dead faint, the lighted lamp falling from her hands as she fell.

"Mercy on us!" screamed Mrs. Gates.

No wonder she was frightened. The lamp shat-

tered in a thousand fragments. In an instant the oil was ablaze on the carpet.

"Oh, oh! Save her! Save her!" shrieked Mrs. Gates, wringing her hands helplessly and making no effort to do anything.

Dan sprang to the rescue. Was he ever to be rescuing Alice from some danger or another? He seized her in his arms and carried her to the open window, laid her down and began stamping out the flames.

"Fire! Fire!" shrieked Mrs. Gates, flinging open the door and shouting at the top of her lungs.

It was the worst thing she could have done. A strong draught came sweeping through the door, fanning the flames which Dan had almost extinguished into new life. The mischief was done—it could not be undone. The cheap carpet was all ablaze, and the floor beneath it.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

They seemed to be shouting it in the street below. It was certainly not Mrs. Gates's voice that was calling now. Everybody seemed to be shouting fire all over the neighborhood. More than that, a dense black smoke began to find its way through the door. Dan saw and heard all this, but did not grasp the situation. He only knew that the fire in the room was beyond him now—that the only thing to do was to retreat. Seizing Alice in his arms, he started for the door. A rush of thick, suffocating smoke met him.

"Mrs. Gates! Mrs. Gates!" he shouted.

Then his foot struck against something. Horror of horrors! Here was Mrs. Gates lying unconscious at the head of the stairs.

"Oh, Dan, what is the matter?"

It was Alice in his arms, speaking faintly.

"Alice! Thank Heaven! Look—the place is all ablaze!"

"Put me down, Dan. Mother—where is mother?"

"Can you stand, Alice?"

"Yes, yes! Mother!"

"There!"

Dan pointed to the door as he placed Alice upon her feet.

"Oh, Dan! Dan!"

"Courage, Alice! She has only fainted. Courage, and I will save you both!"

Brave Dan! Of course he knew by this time that there was another fire in full operation below. He could see the light, hear the crackling of the flames and the cries of the tenants on the other floors. Taking the unconscious form of Mrs. Gates in his arms, Dan made for the stairs.

"Follow me, Alice! Keep close behind me. I will save you both!" he cried.

"Dan! Oh, Dan!"

"What is it, Alice?"

"Save me from Joe Runk. He is my husband. I was married to him last night."

To Dan it seemed as though this was the last straw. Alice married! He had known for years that he had loved the girl, but he never knew how much he had loved her until now. But he never hesitated an instant.

"Come, Alice! Come, Alice!" he shouted, as he hurried downstairs.

"Hold on! Hold on, there! The house is on fire!" shouted a voice behind them.

"Help! Save me!" came another cry.

"Saturday, Dan," replied Pat meekly.

The poor fellow had spoken his last word of protest, and had been sat down upon too heavily to object to anything now.

"That's right; Niblo's Garden, driver. Crosby street entrance—I mean stage door."

The door was closed, and the hack rolled away. It was about all Dan could stand. He laid his head back against the cushions, and never spoke until the stage door at Niblo's was reached.

"Here we are, Dan," said Pat, as the hack stopped. "Brace up, old man!"

"Pat!"

"What is it?"

"Go tell the stage manager I am here. Mention my name—he will remember. Tell him I want to see him. If he's not there, just inquire if Pepita sang at the matinee to-day."

Pat was back in a minute. The stage manager was not in the theater. Pepita had not sang in the matinee. She had not been seen nor heard of since the night before. Nobody knew her address. As a consequence, the opera had been changed. Dan drew a long breath.

"Tell him to drive to the police headquarters, Pat."

The order was given, and the call made. Dan did not try to get out. He wrote a note to the inspector, and sent Pat in with it. The inspector was not in the building. But a subordinate came to the carriage, and to him Dan related his story.

"It's a thousand dollars' reward for the man who finds that lady," he said emphatically.

"The best we can do shall be done, sir. I shall send out a general alarm at once," was the reply.

"Home! Tell him to take me home, Pat!" said Dan.

In a few moments they were rolling up Broadway.

"How do you feel?" asked Pat.

He had not ventured to put the question before.

"I neither know nor care. I've undertaken this job, and, with the help of God, I'll put it through if it kills me."

"You've got lots of pluck, Dan."

"If I hadn't had pluck, you might have been nothing but a bootblack still, Pat. Here, take these papers. I think your sharp eyes can see the stock list by the carriage light. I'm in Northwest pretty heavy, you know; tell me how it closed."

But Pat never reached the stock list. As he unfolded the paper his eyes rested upon a headline which a blind man might almost have read.

"Heavens and earth, Dan! Look here!"

But Dan had seen already. The article was headed:

"Sudden death of the millionaire banker, Theodore Gates!"

CHAPTER XIV.—By Way of the Garden Gate.

"There is somebody in charge there besides the servants."

"Bet your life there is, Dan. The house would not be lit up so if there wasn't."

"Who can it be? What can it mean?"

The boys had reached the Fifth avenue mansion, which for three years had been home to Dan, and

were now ascending the steps. There was crepe on the bell handle, but the whole front of the house, instead of being properly darkened, was ablaze with light. What did it mean?

If the sickening intelligence that Mr. Gates had dropped dead at the breakfast table was true—and all the evening papers had it so—it was a very peculiar thing to find the house lit up like this. Pat helped Dan up the steps and rang the bell. The hackman was paid and dismissed as they alighted, and now drove away. Poor Dan! He was so weak and nervous that he could not have stood on his feet but for the help of Pat. He had loved Mr. Gates like a father. The mere fact of his death was enough to unnerve the boy, to say nothing of all the rest. Suddenly the door flew open, and there stood Peter, the butler—a man who had worshiped Harry Gates, and never at any time had liked Dan.

"Humph! It's you, is it?" he sneered impertinently. "You can't come in here."

"What!" cried Dan, starting forward in fury.

But he staggered back from sheer weakness, and was caught by Pat just as two young men in evening dress came staggering out of the parlor, not from weakness, but from quite another cause.

"You—hic—you snoozer! You alive! You—hic—you get out of here!"

It was no less a person than Mr. Harry Gates who spoke, and he made a pass at Dan. It was too much for the load he was laboring under; he fell plump on his nose. Not so Joe Runk, who came close behind him.

"You get out of here, Denning. Show your face again and you're a dead man!" he hissed. "The old gent's will is in Harry's favor, and we propose to hold the fort."

Slam! Bang! It was the big front door. It was shut in Dan's face, and bolts and bars were heard going up, but Dan never spoke a word. The reason was that he had fainted with his head on Pat's shoulder.

But yesterday Dan had been on the top vane of prosperity. Terrible was the change which had come upon him now. Brave Pat! Although he was but a slightly built fellow, he carried Dan bodily down the steps and around the corner, and set him down in the gutter by the garden gate, which had played so important a part in the stirring adventures of three years before.

"Dan—Dan! Speak to me, Dan!"

"I'm all right, Pat. It was only a faint."

"It's a terrible thing, Dan."

"What's a terrible thing?"

"That you should lose all the money."

"Nonsense!" cried Dan. "Don't you be too mercenary. Money isn't everything."

"But the will—"

"Is in Alice's favor if she is alive, and mine if she ain't. They haven't got it. It's locked up in my private box in the Safe Deposit Company, Pat."

"Good! Oh, the scoundrels!"

"Do you know why I fainted?"

"Well, I should say so."

"But you don't. It was because I saw Alice Gates lying on the sofa in the parlor. Pat, that poor girl is in the hands of those drunken scoundrels. She must be saved."

"What shall we do, Dan?"

"Leave me and go for the police. I— Hark! What was that?"

A carriage rolling up Fifth avenue was slackening speed as it approached the house. Dan staggered to his feet.

"Help me round the corner, Pat. I must see who that it!" he exclaimed.

"They got as far as the corner of the fence, and Dan's strength gave out again. He clutched the fence and held on. The carriage had stopped before Mr. Gates's door, and out of it stepped a man wearing a big white hat and fur-trimmed overcoat.

"Pat! Pat!" whispered Dan.

"What is it, old man?"

"Sneak up to the foot of the steps. Hear what name that fellow gives."

"And leave you, Dan?"

"Go—go!"

Pat went. It wasn't necessary at all; the man roared his name so loud that it might have been heard half a block away.

"Tell them Mr. Midwood is here. Midwood, from Australia!" he shouted.

He was admitted promptly and the door closed. Pat found Dan still hugging the railing.

"Did you hear?" he asked.

"I did. It's the man I thought it was, Pat."

"Who is he?"

"Alice's uncle. It is through him that the mysterious fortune for which we have been so long fighting is to come."

"What's to be done? Shall we go for the police?"

"There's no time, Pat. What we must do is to get into the house and expose those scoundrels. I am not sure now that it was Alice I saw on the sofa. It may have been the woman who decoyed me into the alley. Come, Pat!"

"Where?"

"Through the garden gate."

"But—"

"No buts. Come!"

"It might kill you, Dan."

"Come!"

And Pat went. There were but few persons moving on the block when Dan opened the garden gate with a key which he always carried.

"It's like the night Mr. Gates and I went in to rescue Alice before," said Dan. "Dear me! What shall I ever do without him? Here we are, Pat. Slide in!"

They slipped through the gate.

"It's the old times come again," murmured Dan, as together they stole up the conservatory steps.

Dan had a key to the conservatory door also, and he opened it. They could hear the sound of loud voices talking in the parlor as they stole in among the heavy foliage of the tropical plants which filled the glass-covered space.

"Pat, you go for the police," breathed Dan. "Run around and call Mr. Manning, Mr. Gates' lawyer, too. You know where he lives. I—"

"No, Dan."

"You must!"

"Dan, I won't. I cannot leave you. What could you do against those villains? For once I must stand my ground."

It was useless to urge Pat. He was firm. Dan tried it, but even as he spoke the voices were heard again.

"You are drunk, sir!" shouted a rough voice. "Don't talk to me! You brought me here to see my niece. Where is she? What do you mean?"

"She's—hic—she's upstairs with her husband. She'll—hic—she'll be down in a minute," came the reply, in the voice of Harry Gates.

"If she ain't, by Jove, I'll lay you out! You fooled me three years ago. I'm not to be fooled now."

It was Midwood, the Australian. Dan knew that, of course. The boys, concealed among the shrubbery in the conservatory, took all this in, and more. The quarrel continued for a moment or two. Harry Gates was almost too drunk to speak.

"It's a fraud! It's a fake!" roared the Australian. "I'll have you to understand—"

He paused suddenly. Footsteps were heard by Pat and Dan. Peering through the shrubbery, they saw Joe Runk coming into the parlor, leading a young lady by the hand.

"Mr. Midwood, this is your niece, Alice Gates!" he exclaimed. "Now Mrs. Runk—my wife."

"It's a lie!"

Suddenly from the concealment of the shrubbery Dan Denning dashed.

"It's a lie!" he shouted. "Beware, Mr. Midwood, they are a pair of swindlers! That lady is not Alice Gates!"

CHAPTER XV.—Back to the Alley.

"Calm yourself, young man. Don't get excited."

"She is not Alice Gates! It is a lie! They are a pair of swindlers!"

"You're a sassy thing! Mind your own business! I was Alice Gates before I married Mr. Runk!"

"You drunken snoozer! Raise your hand agin that gentleman an' I'll knock the whole head off of yer."

"Police! Murder! Police!"

In Mr. Gates' parlors everybody was trying to talk at once, and everything was in the greatest confusion as the result of Dan's sudden bursting into the room. Pat, who came tumbling after Dan out of the conservatory, had knocked Harry Gates down, and was now pitching into Joe Runk, who in turn was pitching into Dan, while the woman who had personated Alice was screaming, and Midwood, the Australian, shouting out for Dan—the most excited one of the group—to be calm.

All this was the work of an instant. The instant following Dan's sudden bursting into the parlor, the next and the whole scene changed. Suddenly the Australian dashed aside his hat and heavy beard which no one would ever dream was false.

"Let no one attempt to leave the room!" he said sternly. "I am in charge here, and my men are in possession of the house."

"Detective Bird!" cried Dan, dropping into a chair.

"Ay, Joe Bird, hired by Mr. Gates to look into all this crooked business! Mr. Denning, you and I will take charge here."

"You're a fraud! A fake! You've no right here at all!" roared Joe Runk. "Woke up there,

Harry, and say something! Wake up, you drunken snoozer! Ain't this house yours?"

"Course 'tis! Lemme 'lone!" grumbled Harry Gates from the floor.

"Ha, ha! Bully for us!" roared Pat.

Pat was jumping round like a wild man from sheer joy. Harry Gates having been put down, seemed likely to stay down. In short, Harry was too drunk to get up without help, and even now was half asleep upon the floor.

"Hush! Remember the presence of the dead!" said the detective solemnly. He gave a slight whistle. Immediately a man stepped in from the hall, dragging after him the woman who had attempted to personate Alice Gates. It was Gussie, who had lured Dan into the alley. Our hero recognized her at a glance.

"Take care of these prisoners," said the detective. "I want to have a word with Mr. Denning. Bless me! How sick you look, my dear sir!"

"I am sick. I—"

Now Dan remembered saying this much, and the next he knew he was lying on his own bed upstairs. The detective was standing over him, looking very much alarmed.

"Hello! You are all right now?" he exclaimed joyfully.

"Yes, yes! Did I faint?"

"Faint! I should say so. You scared the life out of me, Mr. Denning. There, there! Don't try to rise. Your friend has gone for the doctor. I—"

"Out of the way! I will get up! I want no doctor!" cried Dan. "Mr. Bird, we hired you to look up Alice Gates. I have seen the girl—her life is in the hands of those scoundrels. Help me downstairs."

"But, my dear sir, you are just out of the hospital, your friend tells me. You—"

"Not a word! I don't know why you're here, Mr. Bird, nor what your game is, but you mustn't interfere with me."

"Gritty as ever, by Jove!" muttered the detective. "Come on, if you will have it so. The prisoners are safe with my man, however, so there's no need of haste."

Now, just so surely as Dan was gritty, was Detective Bird mistaken. When they got downstairs—and Dan went without help—there lay the detective's assistant bound and gagged upon the parlor floor. There also lay Harry Gates, dead drunk, but Joe Runk and the girl Gussie were not to be seen.

"Flames and furies! What's this—what's this!" roared Bird.

"Peter's work. Peter and the rest of the servants are in charge of another of my men down stairs!" cried Bird, as he pulled the gag from the man's mouth.

"Speak! What happened you?" he added.

"Well, boss, dey were too much for me. Dat woman is a corker!" said the man.

"Liar! They bribed you! By thunder, here it is!"

As he shouted, Bird pulled a ten-dollar bill out of the man's vest pocket.

"No, no! Dat's mi'ne, boss," stammered the fellow in a confused way, which showed Dan that the detective was probably right.

Now, Bird was nothing if not a man of quick

action. Whipping out his knife, he cut the bonds which held the fellow captive, seized him by the collar and the slack of his nether garments, and ran him deliberately out the front door, kicking him down the steps as a last parting salute. Dan was close behind him, too. He saw the carriage still standing at the door.

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. Bird, take me to where I want to go if you would save the life of that innocent girl!" he exclaimed, clutching the detective's arm.

"But are you able?"

"I must be able. I must stop for nothing—not even to see the dead body of him who was more to me than a father. Come!"

"Well, by Jove, you're the grittiest one I ever saw!" muttered the detective.

Three minutes later they were whirling toward the Catherine street alley in the carriage by which the detective in his disguise had come to Mr. Gates' house. Mr. Bird was railing out against the incompetence and crookedness of detectives generally, seemingly forgetting that he was one himself, when Dan interrupted him with:

"How came you at the house personating this man Midwood, Mr. Bird?"

"How came I there. Why, I was hired by Mr. Gates yesterday to look up Midwood. Didn't he tell you?"

"No. He had been ailing for some time, and kept his room. It so happened that I didn't see him yesterday. Did he send for you?"

"Yes."

"How did he know Midwood?"

"Saw an ad in the Herald personals offering a reward for information concerning the whereabouts of Alice Gates."

"You don't mean it?"

"I do."

"You saw Midwood?"

"I did, at the Astor House. He had just had a visit from Runk and young Gates, whom he had seen three years ago. Runk claimed to be Alice's husband, and that he could and would produce her to-day."

"I see. And then?"

"Then Midwood had no use for me."

"Why?"

"Why, don't you know why Alice's mother would have nothing to do with Mr. Gates?"

"Indeed, I don't!"

"Strange! I might as well tell you, though."

"Tell me—tell me!"

"Why, the fact is, Theodore Gates killed his brother in a quarrel years ago."

"Great heavens, you don't say so!"

"Fact. They quarreled over some trifles, and John Gates, Alice's father, was killed. Theodore was tried and acquitted. This was when Alice was a mere baby. Over and over again Theodore Gates tried to help his sister-in-law and her child, but she would not have it. Midwood is Mrs. Gates' brother, a wild fellow who had made a big fortune in Australia. He was here three years ago, looking for his sister, but he could not find her. He advertised; Joe Runk, who was running after Alice then, answered the 'ad,' and came near getting his clutches on the man, when he got arrested, and—"

"And I know the rest!" cried Dan. "I can

scarcely believe it. Why didn't Midwood look up Alice himself? Why—"

"Oh, he got disgusted, thought it was all a fraud, and went back to Australia."

"But did Joe marry Alice?"

"Don't know. All I know is that those two fellows have pounced on Midwood again. He was afraid of them, and welcomed me with open arms."

"Why didn't you take him to Mr. Gates then?"

"He couldn't come yesterday, but he agreed to come to-day."

"Too late!"

"Yes; poor Mr. Gates! When I called at the Astor House this afternoon to explain, I found that Runk had been there again and had told him of Mr. Gates' death, adding that Harry Gates, whom he styled his bosom friend, had come in for all the property."

"Lies—all lies!"

"I don't know anything about that. Very likely Midwood suspected a plot and swore he wouldn't go. I suggested making up to look like him and going to see what it all meant."

"And you did it?"

"I did it; and you know how it came out."

"Would you have been fooled by that woman if I hadn't come in?"

"I? No—never! But look here, you're talking too much, and haven't told me yet where you are taking me. Let's get down to that before you play out."

But Dan did not play out. He seemed to gather strength with every turn of the carriage wheels. By the time they reached Catherine street Detective Bird knew all that Dan had to tell.

"Let's go by the way of Oliver street," he suggested, and they called to the driver to turn into East Broadway. At Oliver and Henry streets they left the hack and walked to the alley. Here was the half-ruined tenement staring at them, as though its burned and blackened windows had been huge eyes. They hurried into the alley. There was the house into which Dan had been inveigled. It was closed and dark, but Mr. Bird went straight for the door.

"I'll shake 'em up, blast 'em! I'm not a bit afraid of a whole regiment of such cattle."

He had raised his hand to knock, when suddenly a wild scream rang out from within the house: "Murder! Murder!"

"Great heavens!" gasped Dan, clutching the detective by the arm. "That is Alice's voice!"

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

"Alice! It's Alice! Save her, Mr. Bird!" cried Dan, in great excitement.

But though excited, Dan did not forget to act. That would not have been his style at all. He flung himself against the door with a force which one would scarcely have supposed he could muster, considering the condition he was in. But he couldn't open the door. He might have known it. Bang! Suddenly the report of a revolver rang out through the alley. Dan caught sight of Joe Runk just drawing his head in through one of the windows on the top floor.

"Great heavens! They've shot me!" gasped Detective Bird, sinking to the pavement. Dan was at his side in a moment.

"It's only in the leg. Drag me out into Oliver street," the brave fellow said.

This was done in a moment. Dan had totally forgotten his own condition now.

"Take my revolver. Go for him—go by way of the burned house and the roof if you can!" groaned the detective. "Hello! Who is this?"

A hack, driving furiously down Oliver street, had stopped at the curb. Out jumped Pat and two policemen.

"Dan! Dan!"

"Pat! What brought you here?" was all Dan could gasp.

"Gates—Harry! He's got the D. T.'s, Dan! He has confessed all. Alice is in the house in the alley. I went for the officers and followed you. I was sure you'd come here."

"Good enough! That's the talk. Go for 'em, boys! Go for 'em!" cried Bird. "I only wish I had my legs!"

Led by Dan, the little party dashed down the alley like mad.

"Sign! Sign right here or I'll kill you! I've stood nonsense enough. Your friends can't help you. I'm a desperate man. I mean to put this thing through!"

"Never! You can kill me if you wish—if you dare. You have persecuted me long enough. Rather than remain in your clutches, I'd gladly die. I'll never sign."

"Then die!"

It was Joe Runk who made this awful threat. The scene was in the house in the alley—in the very room in which Dan Denning had been confined. Poor Alice! Captured by Joe and Harry, dragged up over the roof and hidden in their den, she had been there ever since the fire, kept a close prisoner, bound all the time, and gagged until now that Joe came rushing in, half drunk, raving and storming like a madman.

"You've got to sign this paper!" he informed her, as he removed the gag.

But Alice refused. Then followed a stormy scene. This was the end of it. The brave girl, undeterred by the pressure of the revolver against her forehead, refused point-blank to sign.

"Never—never! I won't do it!" she declared.

"You are my wife. You will do it, or I'll kill you!"

"You made me your wife by force. You drugged me. Heaven knows what you would have done had not your crimes overtaken you and the woman to whom you took me that night after you played that trick on Dan Denning by hiding me in my uncle's stable; set me free, Joe Runk. I have lived here in these slums because I feared you. Fortune has smiled on me, but I dared not come forward and enjoy my triumph lest you should hear of me and claim me as your wife. I little dreamed you were so near me. I—"

"Shut up! I'll hear no more. Sign!"

It was too much for the poor girl. Her overstrained nerves would not stand it.

"Murder! Murder!" she shrieked hysterically.

At the same instant came a furious banging on the door below.

"Flames and furies! What now?" cried Runk, rushing to the window.

He softly raised the sash, peered out a moment, and then fired.

"There, that settles them," he growled. "They will bother us no more. Now, then, sign!"

He staggered forward, revolver in hand, but he never reached the couch upon which Alice lay. Suddenly he fell, and at the same instant the sharp report of the revolver rang out through the room.

"Great heavens! I've shot myself!" he yelled.

His foot had caught in the ragged carpet. Fate had saved the girl, but the shock was too much for her. Faintness seized her. In an instant all was blank. The next she knew a cold hand was laid upon her forehead. Horror of horrors! There was Runk on his knees beside her, his face streaming with blood, the cocked revolver clutched in his hand.

"You—you—you are the cause of all my troubles!" he hissed. "I'm dying! I've killed myself; but you shall die, too!"

"Help! Oh, God! Murder!" shrieked the unfortunate girl.

"Help cannot reach you. We die together. Say your prayers!"

Thus spoke Joe Runk; but even as the words were uttered the closet door behind him burst open with a bang.

"Liar! Help is here!" cried the voice that Alice knew so well.

It was Dan Denning. It was Pat Sweeney and the policemen behind him, all just down from the roof.

"Dan—Dan!" shrieked the girl.

"Saved, Alice—saved!" cried Dan, as he struck the revolver from the dying villain's hand.

"When is it to be, Dan?"

"This day week, Pat."

"Hooray! And am I to be best man?"

"Why, of course! Who else?"

"Who else, indeed, Pat! I declare I'll never marry Dan at all unless you stand up with him. So there!"

This conversation, which had taken place among the flowers in the conservatory of Mr. Gates' mansion, had been suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Alice. She was leaning upon the arm of a large, florid-looking gentleman, while behind her came Mrs. Gates, looking thoroughly satisfied with the world and herself.

"Why, of course. The sooner the better!" cried the gentleman. "Dan, when you and Alice are married I shall make my home with you if you'll let me. I've made up my mind not to return to Australia, and have this day executed a will in favor of Alice. You made a bold fight for her fortune, my boy, and as sure as my name is Midwood, you have won!"

Now, this was true. A month had passed since that dreadful night in the alley. Everything was all right now, all around. Our New York working boy had brought his fight for the fortune to a successful finish, so we may as well bring our story to a close. A week from that day Dan and Alice were quietly married as arranged. There was no obstacle in the way to this, as Alice had imagined. With his dying breath Joe Runk confessed that he had deceived Alice by writing her

letters while in the Tombs three years before to the effect that she had married him while in a drugged condition.

Joe's confession showed this to be entirely false, and he died half an hour after he reached the Oak street station, whither he was conveyed on that eventful night. There had been no trouble from that moment. Alice, freed from her bonds, was taken to Mrs. Gates' house by Dan, who never laid by an hour on account of his wound. On the way the girl told Dan that the reason she had concealed herself from her uncle was on account of her mother's feelings against him because of the killing of his brother, which he claimed to have been accidental, but which she did not believe.

Indeed, now Alice refused to go to the house until she learned that her uncle was dead. Next day Mrs. Gates was discovered in Bellevue, whither she had been taken after the fire. She was but little injured, and overjoyed to be reunited to her daughter, whom she had believed to be dead. Then Mr. Midwood was brought in by Detective Bird's assistant, the detective himself being laid up with a wounded leg. Before they reached the house, Harry Gates had taken himself off. He has never been seen nor heard of from that day to this, nor has the woman Gussie.

Dan believes Harry to be dead. Alice never returned to the stage, but after Mr. Gates' funeral remained with her mother in charge of the house. There is much we could tell about her life during those mysterious three years, but we have promised not. Alice is somewhat older than Dan, and a little sensitive on that account of having her private affairs discussed. Indeed, we have said enough. These events happened some years ago. To-day Denning & Sweeney is the style of the banking firm. Alice is the senior partner. Her uncle's will left her everything, and Dan will not touch a cent except in a regular business way.

The firm is noted as very rich. Besides Mr. Gates' millions, Alice has inherited more than a million from her uncle Midwood, who is now dead. It was a relinquishment of her rights to this inheritance in favor of himself that Joe Runk wanted her to sign. But Joe lost, and the fight for that fortune was won by Dan Denning, our New York working boy.

Next week's issue will contain "JACK, THE JUGGLER; or, A BOY'S SEARCH FOR HIS SISTER."

In spite of its clumsy build, the hippopotamus can trot fast. That is why he was given the name of river-horse. The hippo's feet are kept far apart by the wide body and make paths with a ridge down the middle, so as to be recognized at once. They swim well, but go at their greatest speed when they can gallop along the bottom in shallow water. They can stay under water a long time, and when they come to the surface they send little jets of spray from their nostrils. The cow is devoted to the calf. The young one stands on her back as the mother swims.

CURRENT NEWS

NORTHLAND INDIANS STEAL NAVY BALLOON.

Some wonderful canoes appeared mysteriously recently in the James Bay region. They were constructed, not of birchbark, but of a strange material the North had never seen. As light and swift as swallows on the wing, they skimmed the water. Moose Factory Indians marvelled. Had the Great Spirit come from the Happy Hunting Grounds to teach his red children new medicine?

SEALS ESCAPE FROM DERAILED TRAIN.

The first section of a Southern Pacific special train, hauling a carnival company, left the track three miles east of El Centro, Calif., early one day recently. Two cars near the middle of the nineteen-car train left the track and rolled over. Two more cars were derailed. Some trained seals in one of the cars escaped and were found later in a cotton field. Four workmen employed by the carnival company were hurt.

TWO INCOMES.

"Everyone has some degree of opportunity," says *Getting Ahead*, published by a Virginia bank. "But only those who cultivate read the reward. He who lets every dollar slip through his fingers is doing all he can to strangle opportunity. Saved money is the seed of opportunity."

"A man with only one income is like an automobilist a long way from home without a spare tire. If he has a blowout, he may have to walk home. Many people late in life have to walk home or be towed because they haven't provided for unforeseen difficulties. The only way for the average mortal to provide an extra income is to create it from the one he earns with hand and brain."

That is comparatively an easy matter, provided the average mortal saves regularly a portion of what is earned and invests it safely and profitably in Government savings securities.

BUY W. S. S.

CARIBOU MIGRATING.

Mail from Eagle, Alaska, shows that the caribou are off for the North. The great migration of the herds from their winter feeding grounds in the sheltered valleys and woodlands south of the Churchill River and east of the Alaskan Mountains, to their summer breeding lands and pastures in the wide tundras and barrens, started about Easter Sunday. Trappers and miners brought in reports to Eagle that settlers could go and obtain a supply of meat.

The northern trek of these Arctic deer means that spring is near in the Yukon. From Artillery Lake, with his second pack of furs, Julius Lamoyne, trapper, related the passing of the

caribou toward the North. He was awakened, he said, by a great noise early in the morning. He thought it was a storm tearing through the forest or the breaking up of the ice in the lake. The noise was in fact made by the caribou rattling and slashing their hoofs against stones and the frozen ground. The valley and hills were black with a moving mass of herds, which poured in a solid stream from the South.

Many plans have been advanced to turn this vast migration of caribou into sources of food supply. Both Alaska and Canada would welcome such an industry, but the rugged climate and the annual uncertainty of the destination of the migratory animals seems to be an unsurmountable difficulty.

FAMOUS MAKER OF VIOLIN BOWS DIES.

In a cramped little house in Soho a great craftsman died recently—the one famous maker of violin bows that England has produced. The unsurpassed balance of the bows that James Tubbs made, the perfection with which they realized the elusive mean between pliancy and rigidity, the delicacy of their curvature and their fine finish in detail made them the joy of violinists for nearly three generations.

It was a family craft, and more bows bore the name of "Tubbs" than James Tubbs made, but there was no possibility of confusion to those who had once handled a bow of his making.

He loved each bow as he worked on it. The perfect bow was his child, his religion, and it was not allowed to leave his hand till he pronounced it good. Latterly he would even buy back again at higher prices than he ever got for them his own bows from the sheer pleasure of rehandling them and knowing them his,

The old man (he was eighty-six) was an expert oarsman in his youth and had cups to attest his prowess. He gave up rowing, as he once said, for a characteristic reason—the physical exertion of rowing tended to throw out of gear the delicate balance of hand which was the secret of his skill in his craft.

Latterly every particle of material that went to the making of a bow was weighted by him as a check upon his own accuracy. But aside from that—even in his old age—he could sense by the hand alone the most minute differences of weight and balance.

"I have brought you one of your own bows to repair," said a violinist once. The old man put out his hand for the bow and without even a glance at it laid it down again.

"I never made that," he said. He shuffled to a case and taking down one of his own bows passed it to the violinist.

For a few minutes the little shop was transformed into a concert hall, and then:

"I thought it was a new violin that I needed," said the violinist, "but I know now that what I wanted was the perfect bow."

The Young Mail Carrier

—OR—

The Dangers Of The Postal Road

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

He pointed to the smooth stump of a tree, and with a bewildered face the mine owner sat down on it and drew forth a fountain pen and a large notebook from his pocket. Then Dan Despard slowly dictated this letter:

"Donald Cameron, Paymaster:

"Dear Sir: I have been captured by Dan Despard and am held prisoner by him and his men. My daughter is with me. One hundred thousand dollars is demanded for my release and this sum I am willing to pay. You are hereby authorized to pledge the mines as security for whatever amount you may need to make up that sum and are instructed to have the money brought in a bag to the root of the trees known as The Triplets, and there left, and it must be done in the following manner:

"It must be brought during the hours of twelve and one in the daytime and by one man only.

"He must look around to see that nobody is in sight and then place the bag containing the money at the foot of the three trees, after which he will ride away without turning his head until he is out of sight of the triplets.

"Through the bank at Little Medicine it will be easy to raise the money on the mines or any other security you may have to offer, and the cash ought to be in your hands within three days, but in order to allow of time for such investigation as the bank might desire to make, Dan Despard will extend the time of the payment of the hundred thousand dollars to one week.

"Do not fail me in this matter.

"I am in great danger and so is my daughter, and over my signature I order you to use the utmost dispatch in carrying out this matter. Do not make any attempt at rescue, for the camp of the men who hold me in their power is so situated that they can note the approach of everybody who comes within five miles and such a move would only lead to my death. Once more I order you to raise the money as quickly as possible and bring about my release.

"John Cornwallis."

With a sigh the mine owner appended his name to the letter. The captain of the robbers looked at him with a confident grin.

"Now you know just where you stand," he said. "You will be well treated as long as you behave yourself properly and will be set free when the money reaches this camp."

Mr. Cornwallis saw that remonstrance would be useless, and so wisely held his tongue. Dan

Despard looked around him, saw Tom West looking sadly at Betty, and beckoned to the boy.

"You're in the mail-carrying business," said Despard, who seemed in the humor for joking, "and naturally you are the one to deliver this letter."

"You will have to extend the time, captain," said Tom.

"The time for what?"

"The paying of the ransom. Donald Cameron is away from Silver City and will not get this letter until he returns."

Despard grinned.

"I know he is," he chuckled, "because I saw him riding with the sheriff's posse, and as I sent them off on a false scent which I laid for them, it's safe to predict that Cameron and the rest will return in disgust to Silver City by tonight, or in the morning at the latest. Take your mail-bags and get along."

"Can I take a horse?" asked Tom.

"Got none to spare, but you'll find the walking easy, for it's mostly down hill. Off with you, and be lively, for my fingers are itching to get the feel of the money that's coming to me."

Tom caught Betty's eye, gave her a glance full of encouragement, and then slung the mail pouches over his shoulder and started down the pathway that led to the road. He tramped steadily, not bothering to look back, and in course of time reached the rocky pass where he and his companions had been held up.

Here he paused, put his two fingers to his lips and blew a shrill blast that could have been heard a mile. The echoes of the whistle had scarcely ceased to sound among the rocks of the pass when there was a crashing among the bushes that lined the road a short distance away and the black stallion came flying up to his master.

Black Dick neighed with pleasure and rubbed his velvety nose against the boy's face, and after petting his equine comrade for a moment, Tom threw the mail pouches over the saddle, mounted and started off towards Silver City.

Two miles further on he came to a roadside tavern known as the Halfway House, and the sight of the inn reminded him that he was hungry, and he also thought that Black Dick had eaten nothing but grass since morning and would be all the better off for a feed of oats.

He dismounted at the door of the lonely tavern, called for the landlord and asked for a meal for himself and his horse. A stable boy led the black stallion away to the barn at the rear and Tom entered the hotel to get some dinner.

George Blake, the landlord of the Halfway House, set a good meal before the boy and then asked him what news was afloat. Tom told him of the capture of John Cornwallis and the amount of ransom that he was held for, and the landlord threw up his hand in surprise.

"And I think he'll have to pay it," added Tom.

"No chance of rescue?" asked Blake.

"Not the way it looks to me," answered Tom. "I took a good look at things while I was there and I must say that it would take an army with cannon to get at Despard the way he's located. By the way, George, they took my gun away from me; have you got one to lend me?"

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

ROOSTER LIKE A HEN.

In the poultry yard of J. H. Byron, of Mercersburg, Pa., is a bantam rooster which is caring for four little chicks hatched out recently.

About four weeks ago the Byron family missed the crowing of the bantam rooster, which usually began at 4:30 A. M. and continued for an hour or more. It was found sitting on the nest, clucking like a hen.

All efforts to make him leave the nest failed. Seven eggs were put under him, four of which hatched.

FOXES DEAD AND DRUNK.

Beasts of the field and the birds of the air are not protected from intoxication by the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead act, if reports from Vanceburg, Ky., are to be believed. A number of foxes have been discovered lying about in careless attitudes, stupefied, and some have been killed with rocks. Others were already dead, and post mortems revealed all had perished of alcoholic poisoning, induced by eating moonshine whisky mash. Many owls have been found in a similar condition, but curiously no cases of birds that do their sleeping at night have been reported.

MONEY BURNED.

Lying in bed for an extra hour while his wife kindled the morning fire cost Lane Morley, a Salem, Oreg., merchant, \$125, according to his story told to friends.

At the time of closing his store Friday night Mr. Morley put the money in a box near the stove, covered it with waste paper and onion skins and retired with the feeling that it would not be found by robbers.

Early Saturday morning Mrs. Morley went to the store while her husband remained in bed. The weather was cold, so Mrs. Morley helped herself to the accumulation of waste paper and onion skins and started a fire. Into the stove with the refuse went the perfectly good greenbacks.

THE ELECTRIC SKATE.

The large electric skate, a fish so called because it gives out strong electric shocks, was the subject of an interesting report to the French Academy of Science made recently by the Abbe Raphael Dubois. A fine specimen of this fish was brought to the Marine Laboratory at Tamaris-sur-Mer, where it was noted that its electric shocks were powerful.

That same night it gave birth to several baby fish, which on the following morning were found snugly ensconced beneath the mother. While the young were near her she could be handled with impunity, for she gave out no shock; but the moment the young were taken away she resumed the emission of powerful shocks.

Mgr. Dubois draws the conclusion that the electric skate can control her shocks at will, and that she withheld them on purpose not to injure her young.

A SEA MYSTERY.

Wreckage of a large sailing vessel, together with remnants of women's clothing not more than a year old, lie on the island of Secorro, 400 miles west of Manzanillo, according to Capt. R. E. Voeth, who has arrived at Son Francisco aboard the steamer San Juan. Capt. Voeth, who is returning from a two months' cruise among the islands off the Mexican coast, told of finding the wreck while searching for fresh water. Unmistakable signs showed that survivors had lived there for a time, he said, rude shelters having been erected and holes dug in the sand in an effort to find water.

There is no water on Secorro, Capt. Voeth declared. Pieces of clothing and a woman's shoe were in one of the shelters, he said, but of the survivors he could find no trace. On the other side of the island was a ship's lifeboat bearing the word "Polar," the boat apparently having been on the beach longer than the wreck. Capt. Voeth stated that he could find no record made by either American or Mexican authorities of any vessel having been lost recently in those waters or of any ship-wrecked persons having been picked up.

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THE MAD KIDNAPPER.

BY HORACE APPLETON.

Never, so long as I live, shall I forget that night.

There are several reasons why the memory of it is grafted on my mind.

I was on my way to the West, on a business matter of importance, and had taken the night express out of the Grand Central Depot.

We made a stop at Yonkers, where the train was boarded by a lady of middle age, bearing in her arms a babe of about a year.

We made another stop at Peekskill for water, and here the train was boarded by a short, thick-set man, with a short-cut mustache, giving a set and dogged look to a face naturally cast in hard lines.

He gave a keen glance up and down the car and then proceeding direct to the lady I have mentioned, touched her on the shoulder, saying quietly:

"Madam, I shall have to trouble you to bear me company."

"What do you mean?" she indignantly demanded.

"I mean that you are now in my custody until we can determine if this is a child stolen from Yonkers," mentioning the very station where she had boarded the car.

"I will not go with you!" she said sharply.

"Yes, you will," was the grim rejoinder, after consulting a telegram and comparing its description with herself. "I shall not exceed my duty in arresting you."

"And I say that I will not go!" she hissed.

Then, casting an appealing glance around, she cried:

"Gentlemen, I call on you for protection! This man wants to force me from the train. He has some evil scheme in view! Surely you will not let him harm me? Oh, where is the conductor? I want the conductor!"

The conductor at this moment put in an appearance.

He sharply asked what the trouble was, and then demanded of the man some basis for the disturbance he was creating.

From where I sat I could see the man display a badge, and then, stepping forward, saw the dispatch that he handed the conductor.

It said:

"Board train that has just left Yonkers—the night express—and arrest woman of thirty-five, fashionably dressed, brown eyes, having a child of a year and two months with her. Child is stolen. The woman is mad. Stealing children is her mania."

When she found that no one would interfere in her behalf the woman began to rave and act wildly. At last she began to froth at the mouth, her eyes glared, every nerve and muscle was writhing under the influence of a frenzy telling of unsettled reason.

The officer was compelled to put handcuffs on her before they could lift her from the train.

Long after the train was again in motion I

sat there shuddering now and then. I tried to read, to do something to drive from my mind the scene she had presented, but found it impossible. In despair I at last arose and went into the smoking-car, and dropping into an unoccupied seat, began puffing away at a Havana.

The man beside whom I had seated myself was not far from my own age, and a minute later said:

"Do you remember of ever seeing me?"

"I can't say that I do."

"I remember you, however," he said, with a smile, and drew a circumstance to my mind.

"That brings back your face," I said. "And, Mr. Drew, our house has since been recipient of your favors."

"Not to so great an extent as I could wish, both for their benefit and mine."

After that we chatted pleasantly, and he was telling me of his home, and his wife, and his baby, when something happened.

It was unexpected—was over before I had fairly time to grasp what was coming. There had been a smashup.

My head was spinning, my eyes were filled with a painful stinging, I was almost choking, when reason came slowly back to me. It was only a second later that I discovered that the overturned smoker was on fire. I thought of Mr. Drew, and called him by name.

In a weak voice came the reply:

"Here I am, pinned under a seat."

With almost Herculean strength—I had never shown as much strength before, and never have since—I began working at the seat, and finally succeeded in releasing Drew. I then got him out of a window in time to escape the fire that was rapidly enveloping the car.

As I bent beside Drew, even my inexperienced eyes could not fail to recognize that he was dying. He must have guessed what was in my mind—perhaps my face showed it—and he said, pitifully:

"Mr. Haven, I think that I shall not get over this. Will you attend to me, an—and—and—and—if I should die before—before I see my wife, will you tell her that my last thought was a hope that she would forgive me—that I felt then how great a wrong I did her when I pressed a marriage while knowing that she did not love me as a wife should. I—I—"

A spasm of anguish distorted his face, and though he made several efforts to add something further, no intelligible word ever after crossed his lips. He died an hour later.

In accordance with the promise I had made him, I remained by him to the last, and, further than that, accompanied the remains to his home.

At the first sight of Ethel Drew something like an electric shock went through me. It was all I could do to control myself and tell the weeping woman how it had all happened. I could not bring myself to say anything of the lack of love that he had mentioned in his dying moments, and only told her of the occurrences of the night in a casual way.

Before I left the house I saw a two months' old babe—a bright little thing of a boy—who bore his father's name of Edwin.

I don't think I ever knew what it was after

that to have the face of Ethel Drew absent from me for more than a few minutes at a time. I laughed at myself, called myself a fool and a score of other hard names, but all to no purpose. Good or bad, love or absurdity, Ethel Drew was always in my mind.

Several times she had occasion to write to me in connection with the accident on the road in which her husband lost his life, and I came to feel as though I knew her very well. This feeling was not lessened by her cordial reception when I went to call on her on an occasion when in the city of her residence, several months later.

I called on her, I think, as often as once in two weeks, after that, and always found her the same. There was nothing in her demeanor toward me that was aught but the purest friendliness, and I chafed and fumed because it was so. Her whole existence was wrapped up in her boy.

It was slightly over a year after the death of her husband when I again called. She had laid aside her mourning, and presented an appearance of loveliness ravishing to my eyes. I felt more madly in love with her than ever, but I could not fail to see that she looked upon me in a far different light.

We were talking lightly, when suddenly the nurse came rushing in. At once Mrs. Drew was on her feet. In an excited voice she cried:

"Edwin!—something has happened to him—your face tells me so! Speak—quick! What is it?"

"Gone!" gasped the girl, sinking in a heap on the floor.

Mrs. Drew started for the door. She was reeling before she reached it, and going down on her knees she reached forth her hands and clutched the garments of a lady just entering.

"Edwin!" she cried. "He is gone—stolen!"

I was the only cool person there. From the girl I gathered by dint of questioning and patching together the incoherent answers, that she had left the little fellow in his carriage at the foot of the lawn for a few seconds while she returned to the house for something. On going back she had found the carriage empty. She had not been away from it more than two or three minutes.

I hurried out and up and down the road, asking of each person I met for information, but without obtaining a clew.

Thus matters stood when night closed in. It was quite late, and I was thinking of going to my hotel, when questioning the nurse for the dozenth time, I said:

"You are sure that nobody has been seen around here to-day of a suspicious character, or whom you might think possible would steal the child?"

"No, not a living soul—" She halted suddenly and caught her breath.

"So! You have recalled somebody?"

"A woman, sir. I remember now that there is a woman whom I have seen pass several times. I saw her yesterday afternoon, and I saw her again this morning, and she looked very sharp at Edwin—she did, indeed, sir."

"Can you give me a description of this woman?"

"I didn't look sharply, sir, but I know she had eyes that seemed to have fire underneath them."

"How was she dressed?"

"Nicely, sir."

Suddenly across my mind flashed the picture of the woman who had stolen the child from Yonkers that awful night when Mrs. Drew's husband was killed.

I left the house in a state of mind hopeful yet fearful. I made my way to police headquarters, and made inquiries for such a woman as I had seen that night a year before.

At first nobody could tell me anything, but at last some one said that a woman answering the description could be found at a certain house.

Thither I went. An hour later I knew that I had been sent on a false scent. Disappointed, I returned cityward, and spent the remaining hours of the night restlessly tossing on my bed. I was awake and out of doors by shortly after daylight, and I had not gone three blocks when I saw the child-stealer of a year before. I followed her through the streets of the city, followed her close to and past the house of the bereaved mother. Beyond that was the country, many of the spots as wild and untamed as though it were a hundred miles into the wilderness. On the woman went, and at last turned aside into a piece of wood. Still I followed, and just as I saw her open the door of a rude building and enter I heard the wail of a young child.

A few minutes later I was at an open window that afforded a view of the interior. What I saw froze the blood in my veins. The child—and it was Edwin—lay on a sort of bureau, and the woman stood beside it, revolver in hand.

While I remained there, in an agony of mind to be conceived, but not described, the woman spoke:

"Your mother calls you pretty innocent, I don't doubt! Ha! ha! It is one of the fictions of mothers—there never was a man or boy who was innocent. They are all—all—all as treacherous and cruel as the Evil One himself. I wish it were in my power to avenge the wrongs of my sex upon them by sweeping all from the world. But—ha! ha!—I do all that is in my power!"

A man coming along just at that moment, I enlisted him in my services, and we rushed into the house and captured the woman.

We delivered her to the city authorities later, and before night had learned that the woman had but recently escaped from the madhouse, where she had been immured after stealing the child from Yonkers, one year before.

We also learned her sad history. A man professed to love her on whom she showered a devotion that was her whole existence. At the wedding altar he had deserted her. His baseness was exposed by a letter she received from him, telling her that he already had a wife, after she had donned her wedding garments.

From the moment of my restoring Edwin to his mother I noticed an alteration in her demeanor. I could see that she felt a great gratitude for saving her child, and it bade me hope for the best. In the course of a couple of months I ventured to tell her something of my feelings toward her.

"I had thought to live for my child alone," she answered, "but you saved him for me. I believe you love him, too, and"—she blushed then as she added—"I will frankly say that you are the first man who has ever possessed my whole heart."

Well, we've been married some time now.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

BIG PREHISTORIC SKULL.

Scores of people are daily viewing a monster skull, which was unearthed at a point in the "bad lands" near Interior, S. D.

The skull is three feet in length, has two large horns on the top and has saw-shaped teeth, and is that of some prehistoric animal which yet has not been identified by the scientists who have inspected it.

Only the upper jaw has thus far been uncovered. However, the authorities of the State School of Mines at Rapid City will send experts from the Geological Department to uncover the entire skeleton intact, and to ascertain what sort of an animal the skull belonged to.

ASLEEP THREE YEARS.

James S. Eslinger, fifty-four years old, who has been asleep for nearly three years, awoke the other morning in the county hospital at Fort Smith, Ark., yawned, and then went back to sleep, according to the nurse attending him. He did not speak, she said, but he was awake.

Eslinger entered the hospital in 1914, a sufferer from pellagra, physicians say. In August, 1918, he fell into the sleep which has just been broken for the first time. He has been fed through a tube since his lengthy sleep started, physicians say, and has not lost weight.

CAR LIKE WAR TANK CARRIES BANK MONEY.

The Bank of Coney Island, N. Y., has adopted a new device to protect its depositors' money. It has put into operation a fully tested bullet and bomb proof motor car which carries the bank's cash and securities to and from the depositories in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The general outlines of the car show little difference from those of an ordinary motor wagon. The sides, back and top, however, are of bullet and bomb-proof material. In the body of the car is provision for armed men, and small peepholes enable them to defend the car in the event of attack.

The success of the experiment renders it certain that the type of car will be used by many other financial institutions.

BIRDS HAVE SIXTH SENSE.

Birds have a sixth sense, a sense which we humans cannot conceive of, let alone describe. We can call it a sense of locality, but that is as far as we can go.

There are other creatures which share this sense. Take salmon ova from a Scottish stream, carry them in cold storage half way round the world to New Zealand, and hatch them in a New Zealand river.

The little silvery smelts will in due course find their way down the river to an unknown sea where, until recently, salmon never swam. There they will roam to unknown distances, but eventually the survivors will return out of the trackless depths of salt water to the self-same stream where they were hatched and drive up it to the spawning grounds.

Each year the herrings come down the east coast along the same route and almost at the same date. Each year the cod appear upon the Newfoundland Banks with similar exactitude.

The people of Samoa hold holiday on a certain day in the year when vast shoals of a small fish resembling whitebait pass through the lagoons surrounding the islands and are netted in multitudes. I am told that the oldest inhabitant cannot remember a year when these fish failed to make their appearance exactly to date.

LAUGHS

"How do you suppose she manages to make her husband still love her?" "Why she won't let him draw on her principal, and that, of course, keeps up the interest."

"How did that young man come to be accepted as one of the smart set?" "He had a father," Miss Cayenne explained, "who was smart enough to earn several million dollars."

"Bliggins is very opinionated. He thinks that nobody can teach him anything." "Well," answered Miss Cayenne quietly, "I guess he is about right."

"At any rate," said Snappy, closing the discussion, "I mind my own business." "No doubt that's what makes you so narrow-minded," said Bitter.

Mrs. Jones (puts joker triumphantly on her partner's right bower)—My husband says, "When in doubt, take the trick." And I always do. (And she did.)

"You are always more or less skeptical about what you see in print." "Yes," answered the man who has his own ideas about things. "Truth may be at the bottom of a well, but it isn't an ink well."

Friend—Why did you give your wife a pearl necklace for a birthday present? Don't you know pearls are the sign of tears? Husband (significantly)—In this case they were the result of them.

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

GUN LOADED WITH POPCORN.

Martha Cornwall of Elwood, Ind., was shot and wounded in the head the other afternoon by Floyd Cornwall, aged seven.

A shotgun, which had been loaded with popcorn in place of shot, in anticipation of chicken thieves, was the weapon used.

The popcorn made two wounds on the little child's scalp, but the injury will not be serious, physicians say. The boy was playing with the weapon when a sister other than Martha tried to take it away from him, and it was discharged.

SEMI-WILD DUCK FARM.

Unique in British Columbia is the semi-wild duck farm maintained by W. F. Smith. Three years ago Mr. Smith bagged two mallard ducks in a wounded condition and nursed them back to health. The ducks returned the kindness with regular contributions of eggs, and Mr. Smith has been in a position to enjoy, irrespective of closed seasons and game laws, mallard duck and mallard eggs as a regular item of his family bill of fare.

The birds require no particular care and no watching nor enclosed runs. In fact, the descendants of the original birds have become more domesticated than the ordinary domestic duck, never making any attempt to fly. Although being free to roam in the bush they always return home at sundown.

"VENICE OF SOUTH SEAS" SHOWS IMPOSING RUINS.

Having discovered ruins on the Nomatol Peninsula of Ponape Island (one of the Caroline group seized by Japan early in the war), indicating that there was a Japanese settlement several centuries ago, an expedition of Japanese scientists and public officials returned recently to Tokio.

"The ruins of Nomatol," one of its members reports, "prove that many thousand people were employed to erect the gigantic buildings at a time when no other houses were built of stone within a radius of several hundred miles."

"As the natives there live in miserable bamboo huts, the large and imposing ruins show that people of a different race lived there in the past. The ruined walls are six feet thick and twenty feet high. The front walls are made of very large volcanic rocks. The ruins are about 1,000 feet long and 100 feet wide. The ground within the walls, where formerly gardens and courtyards were, is now covered with sea water."

The ruins are called "Venice of the South Seas." Coins found leave little doubt that the early settlers were Japanese.

JAPANESE SAMURAI MADE TO FACE DEATH.

Sato, a Japanese, told the story of the Samurai boy who must once in his life face death—make up his mind that he is to die.

His own case, at the age of twelve, coming home from school, to find his great uncle and his mother all serious, a naked sword on a little wooden rack, the house all in order. To be told that he had disgraced the family, he had dishonored his father's sword and killed a dog.

He would be given the privilege of committing hara-kiri, for he was a Samurai's son. His great uncle gave him an object lesson, showed him how it was done, and told him to proceed, wrapping the blade in paper, that it might not cut his hand, and telling him that he must go as he had seen his great uncle do, in earnest.

The boy begged for mercy. His kinsman and his mother were immovable. Was he afraid to die? If so, they might help him, and the uncle put his hand on his sword. The boy's tears stopped. He knew his time had come and bowed. He opened his dress, rubbed his abdomen three times. He put out his hand and grasped the sword.

He knew no more till a cry "Mate" (top'r) brought him to his senses. The reprieve at last. The knife had been at his vitals. An instant more and he would have been dead by his own hand.

He waited, dazed, in a death sweat. His courage had been tested. He had faced death.

STANDARD "STUFFING" FOR STORE PIES.

America's pie is to be standardized. Piemen from all over the country gathered the other day at the Sherman Hotel, Chicago, and organized the National Association of Master Pie Bakers.

After an all day session of the seventy-five pie magnates it was the unanimous verdict that Chicago was the greatest pie eating city in the United States.

"Chicago consumes 75,000 pies every day," declared I. M. Stickert of Cleveland, one of the organizers of the new association. New York comes second, with 60,000, and Philadelphia third, with close to 50,000. The largest ten cities in the country are eating a half million pies daily.

"One billion pies are eaten every year in the United States, which is proof enough that French pastry and other hifalutin' desserts are not crowding the great American dessert off the table."

Joseph C. Hutchison of Philadelphia, who was elected chairman of the National Piemen, said: "We just had to organize. There was too much experimenting on the part of these foreign-born American pie makers. The Government has taken a hand in the manufacture of pies. We have been requested to agree on a standard filler for our pies. No more substitutes. Eggs must be eggs and sugar sugar. Peaches must resemble more closely the original product. The cherry made famous by the cocktail is now to be found in the cherry pie. Our meeting has resulted in standardizing the pie along the same line as hair cuts, sauerkraut and flivvers."

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

FAMOUS MORSE ELM GONE.

The famous Morse elm at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street, one of the oldest landmarks in the national capital, is gone. It was removed at midnight after a long but losing fight for its life which began when 14th Street was widened some years ago.

This tree has looked down upon every inaugural parade held in Washington. It was named for Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, who, tradition relates, often sat beneath it and recited to interested listeners the wonders of the telegraph. The trunk of the tree has been presented to the American Forestry Association.

FINDS VOICE AGAIN IN AIR.

H. R. Renz, Jr., an overseas veteran of Washington who recovered his voice during an airplane flight here some weeks ago, made another flight recently and again regained his voice, which failed him on April 25. When Renz reached Boeing Field to-day he was unable to speak above a whisper, but after flying for half an hour at an altitude of 12,000 feet he could talk freely without difficulty.

Public Health Service officials who arranged for the tests are not certain that the flights will effect a permanent cure, but plan to continue the experiments if necessary.

NATURAL GAS FURNISHED "HOLY FLAME."

There are no indications that in remote times either the oil or gas was put to much practical use as modern people understand that term, but there is little doubt that priests of the fire worshiping cult which flourished in old Persia made a "good thing" out of them. Not far from Baku are the ruins of a temple of the cult, which is believed to have been in existence for more than 2,500 years. Tower beacons and altars are pro-

vided with channels concealed in the masonry, which demonstrate that gas-fitting is not a craft of modern birth. These channels led from fissures in the earth which once furnished natural gas. To this temple came pilgrims from all parts of the East as late as the '80's of the last century. Beside the walls of the temple to-day stands a modern refinery, furnishing an emphatic contrast in the old and new uses of Nature's gift of oil and gas.

SCENES IN JAPAN.

Among the picturesque sketches of scenes in Japan are those of villages half buried beneath undrifting snow. How such conditions are produced is explained by an American observer who has lived in that country. Specifically, he mentions the case of a village near the beach of the Sea of Japan.

A curious effect is produced by the long galleries running in front of the lower stories of the dwellings which afford a means of passage from house to house when the streets are, as is often the case deeply blocked with winter snows.

The excessive snowfall in the region and on the northwestern spurs of the main chain of the Japanese Alps is an interesting phenomenon. The explanation is simple enough. As the cold north-easterly wind sweeps over from Siberia across the Sea of Japan it is there mingled with a warmer and moister air, so that when it finally reaches the western face of the range this moisture is precipitated in an abundant snowfall on the west flank and summits of the range. Consequently, in the winter and the early spring an extraordinary contrast strikes the traveler.

On the west the valleys lie deep in snow under a sky often hidden in a dark veil of clouds. On the east, however, for months together, a bright sky smiles on valleys and plains comparatively uncovered.

It is to meet the exigencies of this heavy snowfall that galleries are constructed. The inhabitants are compelled to live in the upper story, and additional light and air are then admitted through a paper window in a sort of chimney.

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Did you know that some of the commonest of our garden and field flowers take their names from foreign languages? By finding out the meaning of these words we see the fancied resemblance suggested in the names.

Rhododendron comes from the word rhodon which means "rose," and dendron which means tree. Thus the whole word means rose tree. Pansies were named from the French word pensée, meaning "thought." Verbena gets its name from the Latin word for "twig," iris from the Greek word for "rainbow," and aster from the Greek word for "star."

Buttercups received their name because people thought that cows that ate them gave the best milk for making butter. It has since been proved that cows do not eat the little flowers we call "buttercups," but the name is so pretty that we have kept it.

Foxglove comes from "folk's glove," which means "fairy's glove," for the fairies were known as the "good folks."

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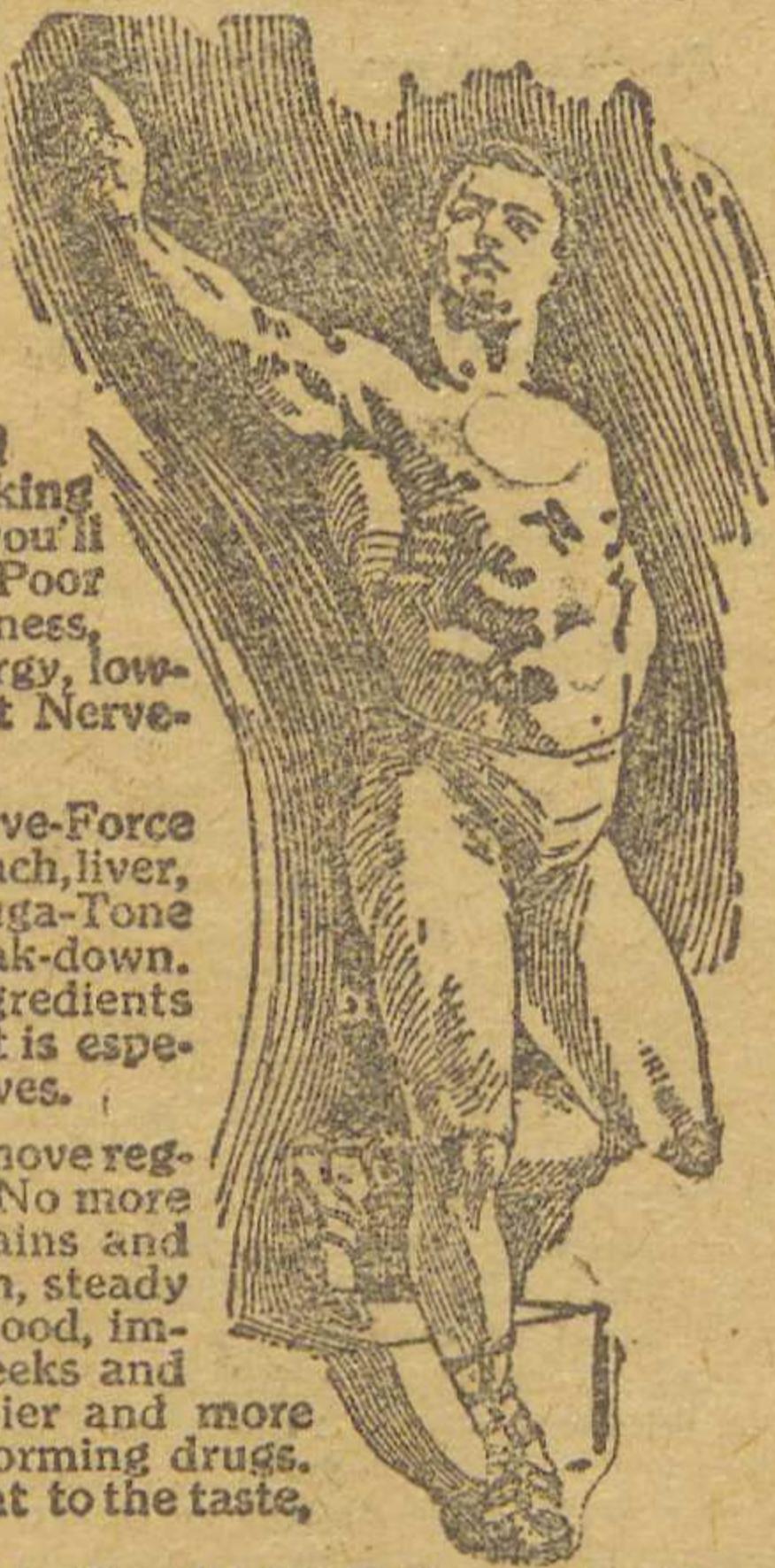
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An intricate system of canals that watered all Babylonia spreads its ruins in the sands for miles around Bagdad. One giant waterway, the Narawan, ran parallel with the Tigris for 300 miles. The date of the building of Narawan was probably about 2500 or 4000 B. C.

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